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Sketches

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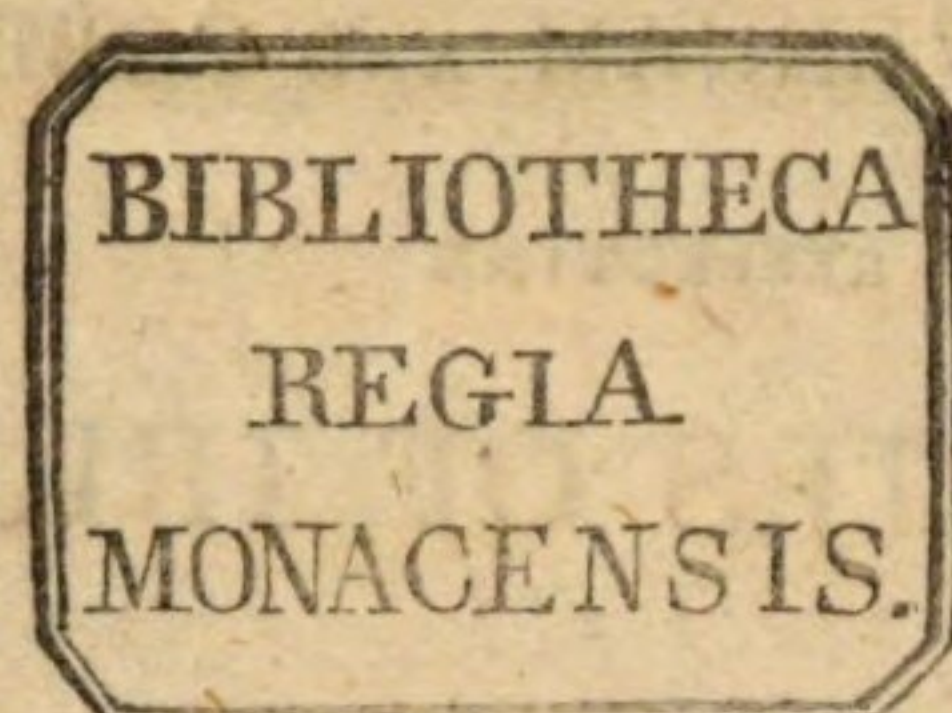
SKETCHES
OF
IRISH HISTORY,
AND
CONSIDERATIONS
ON
The Catholic Question.
Together with
AN ANSWER TO THE MISREPRESENTATIONS
OF
MESSRS. NEWENHAM AND COBBETT,
RESPECTING
THE AFFAIRS OF IRELAND.

"Surely as there are mountebanks for the natural body, so there are mountebanks for the politic body; men that undertake great cures, and perhaps have been lucky in two or three experiments, but want the ground of science, and therefore cannot hold out."—LORD BACON.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

AS some of the following strictures were published periodically in Dublin, the whole work has insensibly assumed the form of a critique. The English reader, therefore, is requested to observe, that the use of the plural pronoun is rather a consequence of the writer's original plan, than a literary affectation.

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PRELIMINARY SKETCHES
OF
IRISH HISTORY.

THE affairs of Ireland have at length obtained that share of attention from an intelligent British publick, which their interest and importance had for some time imperatively required. The history of her past sufferings, the statements of her present situation are eagerly examined by every enlightened individual of the sister country, and speculation is exhausted in providing plans for her future melioration.

To the inquirer into the causes of national prosperity and decline, nothing can appear more paradoxical than the surprizing tardiness of improvement in Ireland. The fertility of her soil surpassing that of most European countries—her coast richly indented with secure and capacious harbours—her lands irrigated by numerous navigable rivers—her climate remarkable for mildness of tumperature and extreme salubrity—All these natural advantages, *why* have they been neglected,

or *how* have they been counteracted, by the people for whom such blessings were designed?

The answer to all this is undoubtedly furnished by history, but furnished unfortunately in scattered portions and detached details. Among the other misfortunes of Ireland we may place, *the want of an historian*. We are not only unpossessed of any impartial narrative of consecutive events, but we are almost wholly unsupplied with those minute relations of independent transactions by which, to use the language of an elegant and philosophical writer, * *meridians* are traced, as it were, through the vast and crowded map of time. Voltaire somewhere says, that the history of England should be written by the *executioner*, since all great events had been decided by his agency. The history of Ireland should be written by an *orator*, for never since the days of Grecian enthusiasm, has eloquence obtained such triumphs as in the Irish parliament. But he should be an orator uniting the energy of the *past*, with the wisdom of the *present*. In recurring to the records of the parliament; in winding his way through that forest of declamation, he should beware of *retinting* faded errors, of reviving antiquated prejudices, of recalling obsolete and inactive antipathies. Ardent for his *country*, but tolerant for his *kind*, he should

* Professor Dugald Stewart's "Account of the life and writings of Doctor Robertson."

dwell upon the consequences of human frailty with that generous gentleness of reproof which is more efficacious to remove error than volumes of vindictive reproaches. In appreciating the characters and conduct of his illustrious countrymen, he should adjust their claims to the gratitude of posterity with the calmness of candour and the fidelity of truth. Borrowing no bias from his faith and no prejudice from his party, he should steer through the conflicts of contending sects, not to mingle in the fray, but to weaken the influence of the combatants. Perhaps we have delineated a chart of qualifications which can be assembled only by the fancy. But there is happily *one* historian who stands in the front ranks of fame, and whose example may cheer some candidate for celebrity to imitate his perfections. While knowledge shall instruct, or charity shall charm, so long shall philosophy and virtue pay their homages to Hume.

We do not wish to class ourselves with that accommodating order of politicians who lavish indiscriminate praise on the conduct of every English government towards Ireland. On the contrary, we have no hesitation in avowing, that down to the accession of his present Majesty little had been done to promote the interests or conciliate the affections of the Irish people. But this is scarcely to be imputed to the imperfect triumphs of Henry; to the frugality and fickleness of Eliza-

beth; to the wavering councils of Charles; to the
 canting cruelties of the commonwealth, or even to
 the stern legislation of William. These were the
 "sins and ignorances" of the times. The contem-
 porary annals of Europe are deformed with exam-
 ples of similar oppressions, resulting chiefly from
 the scanty knowledge which prevailed respecting
 the genuine policy that rulers should pursue. The
 principles of good government may be tracked
 through the snow of philosophy, but history sup-
 plies us with few proofs of their application:
 Besides all this the state of England for five hun-
 dred years was an effectual bar to the tranquillity
 and settlement of Ireland. Was it to be supposed
 that during the baronial encroachments, the strug-
 gles of prerogative, or the flame of religious dis-
 cords, the government of England, had leisure, or
 power, or knowledge to calm the disquietudes and
 adjust the interests of Ireland? Is it rational to
 ask why the many contending claimants for the
 British Crown did not act as enlightened states-
 men towards the Irish people? The simple truth
 is, that nothing *could* have been done for Ireland
 until a regular system of liberty had been pre-
 viously established in the sister country. The
 Pym and Hampdens, the sons of fanaticism and
 freedom, laid the noble foundations of this system.
 The more profound and philosophical revolutionists
 of 1688, elevated and ensured the superstructure.
 But why, it is inquired, was not Ireland included

in this constitutional covenant? Why was she unacknowledged as a party to this bond of peace, and alone exiled from the pale of prosperity? The answer to all this is, unhappily, too obvious. The hopes and fortunes of the abdicated James were centered in Ireland. The mistaken yet magnanimous loyalty of her people was exerted in his behalf, and in determined opposition to the newly-modelled government of England. William too was exasperated by this resistance which formed the sole obstacle to his ambition, and he was resolved to couple suffering with subjugation. Here then is the solution of our problem. England was acquired by *gift*; Ireland was obtained by *capitulation*—England was restrained by the gentle sceptre of law, whilst Ireland, imprudent, improvident Ireland, was ruled by the intimidating sword of conquest!

From the Revolution to the accession of George the Third, the history of Ireland is the history of her uneasy and restless Parliaments. Commercial contentions, unaccompanied by industry; splendid systems of improvement, unattended by advances of civilization. As for the executive, corruption at the prow, and ignorance at the helm, how could the vessel of the state voyage proudly or prosperously?

This state of things was not calculated for endurance, and the period of change was rapidly approaching. America stimulated to rebellion by

the cupidity and harshness of the British ministry, not only resisted at home, but wafted the spirit of independence across the billows of the Atlantic. The patriots of Ireland, for they *were* patriots in intention, were the first to scent the gale of freedom.—We should be proud of these men, so long as we retain a regard for the excellence of an Irish heart, or the vigour of an Irish understanding. Enthusiasm, the mother and sister of eloquence, animated their generous souls, whilst language lent her magic to awe, to instruct, to enlighten. Success crowned their efforts; and in winning a free trade, they obtained strength to wrest a free constitution. Then came the days of triumph and exultation, of promise and of hope.

Scarcely had the people relieved themselves from the riot and rapture of victory, when they became organized into deliberate bodies, for the purpose of disqualifying that house of commons which had fought and won so many battles for national independence. The convention at Dunganon, composed of men whose natural heat of imagination had been additionally inflamed by the events of the American Revolution, scattered visionary projects of Government among all classes of the community. Reform was the ostensible motive of those incautious speculatists, but the obvious tendency of their measures was to effect a political separation from England. The steps to rebellion were subsequently smoothed, and accord-

ingly a rebellion arose, fearful in its aspect, sanguinary in its conduct, but happy in its termination—for it terminated in Union.

Hitherto we have pursued what may be peculiarly termed the political history of Ireland; the annals of her suffering or the records of her shame. But there is another history which furnishes instruction to the statesman, and teaches prudence to the patriot. We allude to the history of her trade. And *such* a history! ignorant and unjust pretensions on the part of England; blind submissions, casual resistance, ruinous retaliations on the side of unhappy and uninformed Ireland.

The early efforts of Irish trade were like those of the sister island, feeble and circumscribed in their operation. But that state of society which is superinduced by the struggles of insurgent industry, was slower in its progress here than in England. The native Irish, barbarized by their customs and outraged by their conquerors, were but little disposed or fitted to pursue the refinements of labour. Tanistry and gavelkind, those pernicious customs so admirably, and even so elegantly reprobated by Sir John Davies, violated the securities of property without curing the evil of inalienable possessions. The ceaseless repartition of lands; the rapid succession of evanescent ownerships; the total absence of permanent interests; diffused desolation over this beautiful and fertile country. The moral character too of its

inhabitants was debased by the impure influence of their savage institutions. Idleness generated a family of active vices. Our wretched people were taught dishonour and dishonesty by their own pernicious customs ; and they learned distrust and deceit from the treachery and oppression of their invaders. Perhaps the philosophical inquirer into the causes of national peculiarities, might find in Ireland more opulent materials for accurate theory, than in any European country. After establishing the pedigree of indolence, he might trace the ancestry of eloquence. He would not fail to perceive the connexion which ever subsists between *idleness* and *garrulity*. Many to talk, and more to listen. The sharpness and vivacity which they must necessarily have acquired in the “ keen encounters of their wit ;” the love of humour, and of satire, which is always connected with roving habits and vagrant associations ; the wealth of language which was generated by the gradual intermixture of two distinct tongues ; one possessed by the master, and the other, the sad immunity of the slave ! From these elements he might deduce the formation of that eloquence which enchants the world. The epigrammatic splendor of diction which flashes from the lips of Grattan ; the inflamed felicities of phrase which delight us in the speeches of Curran ; the dazzling, yet unaffected propriety and ease which constitute the charm of Sheridan’s

orations; and above all, that marvellous combination of supreme, and almost superhuman perfections which was exhibited by the genius of Burke.

So far back as the reign of Edward the Third, we find some clauses in two acts of the English parliament, intended for the protection of Irish trade. We may infer from this, that the English colonists had begun to avail themselves of the productiveness of the soil, though unwilling, or perhaps unable, to improve the capabilities of the people. The traffic thus secured consisted chiefly of cattle.

In 1542, the 33d of Henry VIII, linen and woollen yarn were enumerated among the most considerable branches of trade possessed by the natives of Ireland. The act in which these specifications were made strikingly indicates the ignorance of the times. The preamble states its object to be the prevention of forestalling, or in other words, of persevering and enterprizing industry on the part of a commercial body styled Grey Merchants.

By an act of the 13th of Elizabeth, all persons were prohibited from exporting wool, flax, linen, and woollen yarn, except merchants residing in cities and boroughs. In this last mentioned act it is recited, that the merchants of Ireland had been exporters of those articles for upwards of an hundred

years. In consequence of the peculiar severity of the penalties on the exportation of flax and linen yarn, the inhabitants, or we should rather say the English colonists of Ireland, were compelled to detach their industry from these branches, and to pursue the woollen trade which was less vexed and obstructed by restrictions. The English manufacturers became alarmed at the progress of their Irish neighbours, and in compliance with their groundless and avaricious fears, the Earl of Essex, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in the year 1673, requested Sir William Temple to write an essay on the subject. In this essay Sir William insists strongly on the advantages that would accrue to the Irish from their relinquishment of the woollen manufacture to England, and their adopting that of linen as a substitute. In the speech from the throne to the Irish parliament, 27th Sept. 1698, this recommendation was renewed and enforced. In answer to the speech, both houses concurred in the principle of depressing their woollen trade, and encouraging the linen manufacture. But whilst the Irish parliament was thus committing suicide on its own interests, the English house of peers was sufficiently active in propelling the work of destruction. On the 30th of June, 1698, the Lords presented an address to King William, imploring him to frame some effectual discouragements against the increase of the

Irish woollen manufacture. To this address the king replied as follows:—"I shall do all that in me lies, to discourage the woollen manufacture of Ireland." In the ensuing session, 1699, a law was passed, restraining Ireland from the exportation of any fabrics of woollen manufacture "to any other parts save England and Wales." The inhabitants of Ireland did not at this time amount to more than a million; and many manufacturers quitted the kingdom with their families and assistants, in consequence of this unjust and mischievous law.

From the year 1700, the trade of Ireland seems to have increased in such a ratio as bad laws and worse administrators commonly permit. But Molyneaux, the intrepid and enlightened Molyneaux, the friend of Locke and of human nature, had already asserted the rights of Ireland in the face of English avarice and English pride. In his celebrated "Case of Ireland," he pleaded boldly and virtuously for his country,—and he did not plead in vain. He left to Ireland the legacy of his principles, and the glory of his fame. He did more. He left to his successors in the path of patriotism, that splendid example which was emulated by many,—approved by all,—and surpassed by the genius and generosity of Swift. The political character of Swift has been recently sketched with almost idolatrous admiration, by a writer eminently distinguished for sense,

sagacity, and eloquence.* He has indicated with great force and feeling the extent of obligation conferred on Ireland by the favourite and far-famed champion of her interests and honour. He has pointed out the incalculable advantages which accrued to Ireland from the animating impulse which was thus given to her dormant energies, by the powerful and patriotic exertions of Swift. But it is the condition of humanity that we should buy our blessings at a price. Perhaps Swift's designs were more impeded by the violent and vindictive spirit of hostility towards Ireland, which the justifiable warmth of his writings had a tendency to promote, than by all other causes. When Swift arrived in Ireland, he was astonished and indignant at the aspect of desolation which she presented. A government corrupt beyond the ordinary measure of political profligacy. A parliament seconding the corruptions of the court, and thus legalizing iniquity in forfeiting independence. The English ministry condescending at intervals to fan the embers of discord, and at the same time to extinguish the elements of industry. The Irish people cherishing the most gloomy suspicions in relation to their English neighbours, and this feeling, if not just, was at least natural. How could they be expected to entertain other

* See "State of Ireland, past and present," attributed to Mr. Croker.

sentiments respecting that England, whose strength they had felt only in her oppressions, and whose lenity was discoverable only in her neglect. If the rod be bent too much one way, says the proverb, you must bend it as much the other, in order to restore its regularity. But this adage, though physically true, is full of danger and difficulty when applied to the conduct of the moral world. Swift was not sufficiently impressed with this conviction. He conceived the grand duty of an Irish patriot, to consist in an indiscriminate resistance to English interference and connexion. He made no distinctions. He was content to sacrifice all hopes of private advantage, in order to become the friend and patron of Ireland. But he formed no design of uniting the interests, or allying the affections of the sister countries. Every consideration was subordinate to his ruling desire of rescuing Ireland from her miseries, through the medium of hostility to England. Above all, such was the magnificence of his mind, that he could not divest himself of a wish to

“ Ride in the whirlwind, and direct the storm.”

Swift commenced his projects by anathematizing English manufactures. The feeble progress of the genuine principles of political economy, (even *now* the slowest of the sciences) combined with the improvident penury of the people, enabled him to

diffuse his doctrines not only with impunity but with triumph. Swift had not been enlightened by the maxim, that trade, if left to the parental care of industry, will soon be enabled to adjust and equalize itself. He imagined that home manufactures should always be promoted by an exclusive home market: that the capital of Ireland should be diverted from such branches as she excelled in, to others in which she might oppose herself to England: and that this attrition would weaken the worst parts of British influence, while it polished and purified the system of Irish Independence. With these mistaken views, which were, however, more the errors of the age than the prejudices of Swift, he commenced the political combat of which Ireland was to be at once the prize and the victim. In his "Proposal for the Universal Use of Irish Manufacture," he develops his scheme with great clearness and accuracy. He sets out with noticing the various steps taken by the English legislature to repress, and at length, to annihilate the woollen manufacture of Ireland. After detailing the evils that flowed from this flagitious policy, he proposes not to apply for a mitigation of its severities, but to enter immediately upon a contest with the English in every branch of trade, and more particularly in those which had been so unjustly aggrandized at the expense of the Irish nation. He dwells with great force on the advantages

which might be anticipated from a perseverance in the principle of his plan, and in order to ensure its efficacy, or as he says, "to crown all the rest," he suggests that "a firm resolution be taken by male and female, never to appear with one single shred that comes from England; and let all the people say Amen." In his 7th Drapier's letter, in his "Short View of the State of Ireland," and in several other tracts, he enforces these opinions with as much energy as if the people were not disposed to concur with him. But the people not only went *with* him, but indicated an anxiety to go *beyond* him. They had hitherto hated the oppressions of England, but from this period they began to dislike her connexion.

Now, with all our veneration for the talents, and all our kindest construction of the motives of Swift, we must be permitted to say that all this appears to us very unwise and unprofitable. We cannot persuade ourselves into the patriotic belief, that the Irish nation would have prospered more largely by creating manufactures at home, than by availing herself of the cheaper and more excellent fabrics which were to be procured from England. It was, we humbly conceive, just such another project for growing rich, as that devised by some insane miser, who replenished his chest by plundering his pockets. It was however, upon principles quite as fallacious, that Swift founded his commercial system, and sought for all his

political popularity. He wholly overlooked one of the most important considerations which can occupy the attention of the statesman, that of doing the utmost practicable good which is consistent with the existing form of things. To redress great *national* wrongs is, generally speaking, to hurt great *private* interests. But the enlightened statesman is judiciously aware of the evils arising from a sudden or arbitrary change, and *therefore* he lessens the inconveniences of mutation, by the gentle and gradual application of an alterative policy. Swift however acted otherwise, and it is scarcely an imputation on his fame to say he acted erroneously.

“The field of glory is a field for all;” and the example of Swift was sufficiently animating to produce a crowd of patriotic copyists. Among these, the most prominent and successful was Dr. Lucas. This excellent and benevolent man had been persecuted by the government during the Lieutenancy of Lord Harrington, and in consequence of this tyranny became transformed into a most unwise and outrageous politician. The first effort of Lucas was to persuade the public, that he was a much injured man; and the second to assure them that they were a much oppressed people. He accomplished both his objects with a facility which is only to be experienced in countries vibrating between despotism and anarchy. In the furious

invectives of Lucas against the corruption and arbitrary policy of the government he was but too well justified. But it is to the current of his opinions and conduct in relation to trade, that our present inquiry must be directed—for to this day Ireland continues to suffer from the influence which his doctrines obtained.

The leading topic of the Doctor, was the necessity of emancipating Ireland from all trading dependence on England. The sum and substance of his plan, like that of Swift, was to effect the complete exclusion of all English commodities, and then to set about manufacturing all these interdicted articles at home. According to the Doctor's creed, Ireland should have no commercial intercourse with the rest of the globe, except for the purpose of procuring raw material. Even this proceeding he rather affected to consider as derogatory to the dignity, and noxious to the interests of Ireland. *Toto divisos orbe* was the motto for his speculations. Holding such opinions, however, as these, it was easy for Doctor Lucas to obtain popularity in Ireland. It was allying himself and his cause to all the venerable and much respected prejudices which obscured the real interests of the country; and the more the mist of error became thickened, the more brightly did the Doctor's patriotism continue to blaze. As Lucas was the oracle of the manufacturers, it formed one of his functions, to concert

schemes for their advantage. At one time he issued a manifesto against English silks; at another time he interdicted cottons, or muslins, or broad cloth. It is remarkable and instructive too, that there never was a period in which so much distress and discontent prevailed among the manufacturing classes as during the dictatorship of Lucas. This day's regulation was destroyed by the next day's riot. The artizans of the city of Dublin, in particular, were notorious for every species of outrage. The annals of those days frequently record that bodies of armed manufacturers besieged the houses of parliament, and compelled the members to take such oaths in relation to bills concerning trade, as were prescribed by the majesty of the mob.* But consequences more afflicting than these were observed to result from the foolish and pernicious projects of Lucas. The general mass of industry in Ireland was diverted from its natural and unforced direction, in order to accommodate itself to the wild and wisdomless speculations which he had the imprudence to suggest, and the hardihood to persevere in. Ruinous competitions with the English manufacturers were zealously promoted in Ireland. The capital of the country was violently wrested from its former occupations, and thrown

* "You are not quite so philosophical in Ireland, where all the *tourbillons* of Descartes seem to be in the most rapid motion. What do your mobs mean?" Letter of Lord Chesterfield to Bishop Chenevix, Dec. 9, 1759.

into new channels of commercial enterprize, in which the hazards of trade were infinitely augmented. Connected too with these considerations we may state the injurious effects which proceeded from the ceaseless interference of the Irish parliament in matters of trade. Every branch of manufacture had an advocate to watch over the particular interests which it involved. The path of popularity lay through bounties, and drawbacks and protecting duties. Thus the trade of Ireland was organized into one vast job, bearing down her interests and industry with pernicious vigour. Those manufactures too which seemed natural to her soil, and to which the habits of her people had become accustomed, were deserted for the purpose of transferring the capital vested in them, to *other branches*, in which the superiority of England was manifest and insurmountable. The consequences are obvious. The manufacturers of the sister country poured in their goods in spite of every obstruction which the Irish parliament could devise; whilst our traders, beaten with disgrace from their own markets, were lashed from one expedient to another, until penury and ruin finally overtook them. The grand error that pervaded the minds of the Irish people, consisted in imputing the successful competition of England to motives of political animosity. It never seemed to have occurred to Doctor Lucas, or the parliamentary patriots, that this victory over the Irish

traders was won by the equitable exertion of superior skill, capital, and industry on the part of the English manufacturers. Their triumph was attributed solely to their desire of "heaping all sorts of shames" and injuries, on defenceless and dependent Ireland.

The clamours however which these mistaken views occasioned, led to the free trade recognized in 1779. The *principle* of free trade is so undeniably just, that it appears, at first sight, impossible that even an approximation to this principle should not be attended with advantage. Nevertheless, the annals of legislation do not furnish a more remarkable instance of failure than the celebrated measure just alluded to.—Never were more extravagant hopes conceived and countenanced; never was disappointment more entire and unequivocal. To read the speeches made in the Irish parliament during the progress of this vaunted measure is in fact to peruse a series of Utopian schemes and anticipations. The people, too, partook not only of the frenzy of their legislators, but shared even in their wildest refinements. The nation was rapidly approaching to the condition of the speculative islanders, fabled by their favourite Swift, who wasted their whole time in watching with the utmost solicitude every change and motion of the heavenly bodies, whilst their wives and children were starving below.

The darling object of the parliament was, to play

back the game of restraint and restriction upon the British legislators. To effect this they inverted the unjust and unprosperous policy which England had pursued in relation to Ireland; but in doing so they laid the foundations of innumerable national calamities. Hitherto only individual branches of trade had been depressed and the persons engaged in them condemned to perpetual penury. But the effects of the pretended free trade were infinitely more extensive and disastrous. Capitalists who had previously obtained moderate profits in such branches of trade as were suited to the home market, were tempted to risk all their gains in new channels of speculation, which were thus opened by the attempted competition with England. This universal change of occupations generated an indifference to every industrious pursuit. The man who quitted the cultivation of flax for the manufacture of woollens or cottons was sure to meet indolence on his way. When he grew hungry he worked, but when work, as frequently happened, was not to be procured, owing to the rashness and consequent distress of his employer, he enlisted himself among some of the ruffian associations that disgraced and desolated the land.* In obtaining a free trade, the parliament of Ireland

* "The true ground of fear, in my opinion, is this; that Ireland from the vicious system of her internal polity, will be a long time before she can derive any benefit from the liberty of trade now granted, or from any thing else." Mr. Burke's Letters to Gentlemen in Bristol, 1779.

was perfectly conscious that this great concession had proceeded more from the fears than the liberality of Great Britain. This conviction shed a thousand pernicious suspicions over the subsequent arrangements between the two countries; and generated a system of commercial hostility that produced the most injurious results in relation to Ireland. Early in the session of 1783 a system of "Protecting Duties" was brought forward in the house of commons, and strenuously supported by the patriotic members. The distresses of the manufacturers furnished the popular grounds for this legislative interference, and it was strongly urged, that nothing but the immediate and plenary adoption of some such system could rescue the country from approaching ruin. The good sense and activity of government were sufficiently influential to prevent any measures founded in this system from being enrolled among the already numerous crowd of similar statutes. But the expectations which had been raised among the people were not so easily extinguished. Meetings were held all over the kingdom to promote what was termed a "Non-importation agreement," the object of which was to aggrandize the interests of particular classes of manufacturers under the pretence of national advantage. Strictly speaking, an *effectual* agreement of such a nature would be the death warrant of industry in any country where it might prevail. The non-importation of English manufac-

tures would be equivalent to securing an arbitrary and undisputed market for all Irish fabrics. But industry is quickened not by the *certainty*, but by the *freedom* of the market. If the manufacturers of Ireland obtained the exclusive possession of the home market, there can be no question but that *their* interests would consist in making their goods as indifferently, and selling them as exorbitantly as possible. The moment you remove competition, you destroy the sole apprehension which has hitherto actuated the manufacturer to supply the market with articles of the best quality. He is assured of an immediate sale for *any* goods, and he will no longer expend capital and skill in pushing his fabrics to perfection. But happily for us there is a sanative principle in the constitution of human affairs which perpetually counteracts the absurd contrivances of men. We mean the principle of *individual interest*, by which every person is impelled to advantage himself in every possible way, without devoting the slightest attention to schemes of universal good. This principle will continue silently and unobtrusively to vanquish every project which may be devised in order to augment the particular interests of any favoured classes of the community.

In the session of 1784 Mr. Gardiner (afterwards Lord Mountjoy,) brought forward a series of propositions respecting the distresses of the Irish traders. He stated, and with great truth, that the

utmost embarrassment and indigence prevailed in almost every branch of Irish manufacture. "Who," said he, "can behold so many thousands of his fellow-creatures struggling with calamities almost insupportable by humanity, and not incline to give relief? The misfortune is not particular, it is universal; not confined to Dublin, it extends to Cork, Limerick, Waterford, the Queen's County, and every part of the kingdom where the woollen manufacture is carried on.—Not limited to even the woollen, but affecting every *infant manufacture* in this country."* In order to restore wealth, and comfort, and happiness, Mr. Gardiner produced the heads of a "Bill for the better arrangement of the commercial intercourse between Great Britain and Ireland;" and this laudable object was to have been effected by means of nearly seventy prohibitory duties on various articles imported from England. We have ever considered this speech of Mr. Gardiner as one of the most instructive, though unquestionably one of the most ignorant declamations that was ever uttered in any legislative assembly. It indicates the extent of infatuation which must have prevailed among so many ingenious members as supported the foregoing bill, and which has so frequently and fatally obstructed the best interests of Ireland. It is remarkable too that Mr. Gardiner affected to take the lead in the

* Vide Parliamentary Debates.

House of Commons among the *practical men*: Men who trembled at the mention of a *theory*, and who professed to regulate their plans by the most accurate observation of the business of real life. Notwithstanding all this nothing can be more purely, or perhaps we should say absurdly, speculative than the whole project of Mr. Gardiner. It seems founded in the very extraordinary supposition, that a nation consisting of four millions of persons was utterly unable or unwilling to discover its own interests; and that consequently a vast mass of statutes should be framed in order to compel an entire people to clothe themselves according to the philanthropic whims of their legislators.

To us it appears perfectly evident that all these distresses were occasioned by the folly of Parliament, in endeavouring to adjust the interests of the trading classes in Ireland. We cannot conceive any species of despotism more truly pernicious to national prosperity than this system of unceasing parliamentary interference in relation to the miserable manufacturers of Ireland. The progress of ruin in any particular branch was pretty nearly as follows. A grant was in the first place afforded to some enterprising individual in order to establish an "infant manufacture." Next a protecting duty was imposed in order to secure the undertaker from the effects of English competition. Armed with these gifts and immunities the manufacturer commenced business. We can easily imagine that

very little prudence or frugality was displayed in the management of this eleemosynary capital. It was expended most commonly, in attempts not to rival the coarser and cheaper fabrics of England, but some of those costly and ingenious manufactures which the superior skill, wealth, and dexterity of the English enabled them to send exclusively to market. The hostile Irish manufacture being thus produced by means of an enormous and lavish expense, the English dealers were enabled to undersell it, even in the home-market, and covered by a heavy protecting duty. Our improvident *grantee* found his goods returned on his hands at the end of six months. This was sufficient ground for another application intreating additional parliamentary aid, which was generally successful. The argument on which the advocates for this parliamentary bounty rested their cases was the most absurd that can possibly be imagined. They asserted that the surplus revenue which remained in the treasury after the discharge of all national expenses, should be employed in founding gratuitously different branches of manufacture. Now the simple truth is, that the public money not only possesses the same properties as the wealth of individuals, but is also liable to the same casualties of mismanagement, prodigality, &c. Every misdirection of the public funds must eventually occasion a public loss. This will be visited on individuals in the shape of augmented taxation.

It is perfectly fallacious to say that industry is called into action, even though the project should fail. This portion of industry, in all probability, has been diverted from some more natural and profitable occupation, by the immediate temptation of higher wages. The labourers cruelly deceived by their employers, endeavour to return to their former callings, but find the vacancies which they occasioned completely filled up. Their necessities become urgent, and the government or legislature is compelled by considerations of benevolence or policy, to rescue them from misery or crime*.

Previously to the meeting of the Irish parliament, in 1785, the British cabinet, in concert with commissioners appointed on the part of Ireland, had framed a comprehensive plan for the regulation and final adjustment of the commercial intercourse between the two countries. On the 7th February, Mr. Orde, then secretary to the Lord

* It is much to be regretted that the enlightened author of the Essay on Population did not qualify himself to make a more enlarged application of his principles to the past and present condition of Ireland. The long despotism which she suffered under—The perpetual ignorance and improvidence of her people—The unwise liberality of her parliaments, ever confiding in the omnipotence of *money*—The precarious and arbitrary augmentations of the price of labour, followed by early marriages, and the consequent calamities—The endless variety of our charitable establishments:—All these materials selected and combined would form a work conveying much information to the Irish people and much valuable instruction to their rulers. The reports of the

Lieutenant, announced this system to the House of Commons, and on the 11th, a set of resolutions which he had before laid on their table, was unanimously agreed to by the House without any material alterations. The House of Peers concurring in these resolutions, they were immediately transmitted to England, as the proposed basis for an equitable and final adjustment. The British parliament was occupied for a considerable time in receiving the petitions and hearing the evidence of manufacturers, and merchants of every description on this important subject: and the propositions were afterwards brought forward by Mr. Pitt, but with a number of amendments, variations, and additions. To the original set of propositions, ten new ones were now added, some of them only supplemental to, and explanatory of the former, but several containing much novel

Board of Education, ten of which have been already published, furnish a great mass of useful facts; but the members composing the board seem utterly unacquainted with Mr. Malthus's admirable work. They seem sufficiently aware that all our charitable institutions have failed to amend the condition of the lower orders, but instead of imputing this failure to the radical evils connected with such establishments, they attribute it to abuses of management, &c. In their report, for example, on Wilson's Hospital, in the county of Westmeath, they take occasion to reprobate "the prejudice which exists in Ireland respecting the gratuitous education, subsistence, and clothing of children at charity schools." This *prejudice* is neither more nor less than a love of independence, which, if permitted to expand, would soon render Ireland peaceful and prosperous.

and momentous matter: they were thrown into the form of a bill.

On the 12th of August Mr. Orde introduced this bill into the House of Commons, in one of the clearest, soundest, and most enlightened speeches that had ever been delivered in the Irish parliament. He expressed his entire and heartfelt conviction that the bill which he proposed was eminently calculated to augment and affirm the interests of Ireland, and indignantly disclaimed all disposition on his part, or that of higher authorities, to advance exclusively the trading interests of Great Britain. After these preliminary declarations he commenced the developement of his plan. The grand and pervading principle of the bill was to promote an equalization of interests between Great Britain and Ireland. The objects were to open each country to the other; to remove the prohibitions which the jealousy of England had established in order to secure a monopoly to her trade; and to form a scale of reciprocal advantages, with an equal construction of the navigation laws, and other maritime regulations. The objections which might be offered to the alterations, made in the original propositions, by the British parliament, Mr. Orde endeavoured to obviate by the following clause:—
 “ And whereas no law made by the present parliament can, or ought to limit or restrain the free and unquestionable exercise of the discretion of

any succeeding parliaments, who must be competent equally as in the present, to every act of legislation whatever, and to deliberate, enact, or decline to enact, any of the regulations or provisions to be considered as essential and fundamental conditions of this settlement."

With this strong and most explicit declaratory clause, it seems almost impossible that Mr. Orde's bill should have been conceived as impairing the legislative independence of Ireland. To us it appears perfectly clear that the amendments passed in the British parliament were in lieu of *direct* propositions on the part of Great Britain. We can view the whole proceeding in no other light but as a *negociation* between any two contracting parties. It is sufficiently recognized, that the process can only be conducted in one of these three subsequent modes: 1st, that *each party* should propose a distinct basis, and then compare their separate demands;—2dly, that *one* of the parties should propose a basis, to which the other might accede or suggest modifications; or, 3dly, that a basis should be furnished by a third or mediating party. Now we conceive that, as Ireland had adopted the second of these modes, she had committed herself to abide by the established forms which this mode includes. As a basis had been proposed *exclusively* on her part, it naturally followed, that the objections on the part of England should be directed against the

propositions of that basis. When these amended propositions arrived in Ireland, they of course formed the grounds of a new discussion. But Mr. Grattan, who opposed the motion of Mr. Orde, founded all his arguments in the assumed fact, that the *admission* of the propositions, thus altered by the British parliament, would be a virtual surrender of all independent and substantive legislation on the part of Ireland. Here then the grand error took place. Mr. Orde's bill was a question of trade; Mr. Grattan made it a question of constitution. Mr. Orde advocated the necessity of commercial adjustment; Mr. Grattan contended for the supremacy of the Irish parliament in matters of Irish interest. The splendid eloquence of Mr. Grattan triumphed over the judicious reasonings of his ministerial antagonist, and the bill was finally abandoned.

Thus failed the most useful and important measure that had ever been devised for cementing the interests of Great Britain and Ireland. Two consequences resulted from this failure. The first was the signal retardation of Irish prosperity; and the second was the creation of an imperative necessity for a legislative union between the two countries.

We have before endeavoured to explain the injurious effects which the system of trading encouragements pursued by the Irish parliament, inflicted on the real interests of the country. By

the operation of Mr. Orde's bill, had it been permitted to pass, this pernicious system would have been effectually checked. The bounty of nature would no longer have been obstructed by those vile and mischievous contrivances which rendered the labour of man unproductive. Industry would have discovered its own level; and above all, English capital would have flowed into, and fertilized the land. All these advantages pictured and predicted by Mr. Orde, were scorned by the mistaken policy of Mr. Grattan, and the misguided majority of the Irish people.

From the rejection of these propositions, it became evident that the conflicting claims of the two legislatures could not in future be reconciled. In the shock of rival pretensions, discord and distrust were perpetually generated. A remarkable instance of this occurred in the succeeding session, when a long and violent discussion took place concerning the conditions of the recent treaty with France. In the course of this debate, Mr. O'Gilvie, a gentleman supposed to possess much commercial knowledge, reminded the House of the failure of Mr. Orde's propositions, and exhorted it to frame such a schedule of duties on the importation of French commodities as would fully evince to England, that the favourable terms of *her* treaty were disregarded by the Irish legislature.

In the session of 1792, Mr. Ponsonby brought forward a motion respecting the trade, or rather,

the *no*-trade of Ireland with the East Indies, which gave rise to a very long debate. When the “free trade” was obtained in 1779, no mention had been made of the trade with India. In 1782 this consideration was again omitted. In 1783 and 1784, Mr. Corry moved for a committee to inquire into the business; but the *right* to trade to India being fully recognized, Mr. Corry pressed the matter no further. The trade to India was justly conceived to be the least advantageous of all others, to a country deficient in capital. The slow returns in this trade, which requires a navigation equal to the circumference of the globe, were but little calculated for Ireland, where the quick circulation of her small capital is chiefly desirable. Mr. Ponsonby was desirous to extend magnificent parliamentary aids to persons engaging in this unpropitious traffic. Sir Lawrence Parsons (now Earl of Ross), distinguished himself on this occasion by an excellent speech, in which he pointed out the radical errors in Mr. Ponsonby’s plan, with great acuteness and ability. It is remarkable too, that Lord Ross seems to have been the *first* member of the Irish parliament, who entered thoroughly into the spirit of the doctrines in political economy, diffused by the invaluable writings of Dr. Smith.

On the 20th February, 1794, Mr. Grattan, after some preliminary observations respecting the customs payable on British manufactures imported

into Ireland, moved to resolve, "that it would tend to the advantage of both kingdoms, if Irish manufactures should be admissible into Britain according to the tariff settled in Ireland, for duties payable on the importation of English commodities." Here we perceive that the opponents of Mr. Orde were compelled at last to furnish *his* triumphant vindication. Every term of reproach and contumely had been lavished against his wise and comprehensive system, and yet the very persons who had caused the rejection of his bill, assumed the credit of framing a subordinate measure founded in Mr. Orde's principles, but perfectly inadequate to effect his views.

Here the history of Irish trade may be properly said to have closed; for the parliament became subsequently too much occupied with political questions of a more vital nature, to be enabled to devote their time and talents to commercial topics.

To the reader, who may have honoured the preceding sketches with a perusal, it is scarcely necessary to state, that their main object is to shew the *natural tendency* of political and commercial affairs in Ireland, to produce a legislative union, long before that measure was actively contemplated by the British government. We are convinced that every unprejudiced person will concur in the conclusion at which we have arrived. What have been the positive and specific advan-

tages derived from the union? What circumstances have tended to impair or neutralize those advantages? And what increased benefits may be anticipated for Ireland, when those injurious circumstances shall have ceased to operate? All these considerations, pregnant with interest and importance, naturally form the topics of the following strictures.

REMARKS

ON

Mr. NEWENHAM'S "*View of the Natural, Political, and Commercial Circumstances of Ireland.*"

IN page 289, of Mr. Newenham's work, he advances the following assertion, bottomed on facts subsequently brought forward:—

"*With reference to commerce, the Irish people have no reason whatsoever to congratulate themselves upon the union. The commercial prosperity of Ireland has very visibly declined since that measure was carried into effect.*" In order to support this assertion, Mr. Newenham triumphantly refers to the thousand-times refuted theory of the "Balance of trade." The fundamental error of this theory consists in the assumption that a nation, in order to thrive, must obtain a clear and decisive advantage over every other nation in her commercial exchanges. According to the advocates of this wretched system, trade, instead of augmenting and equalizing the interests of mankind, is only the instrument for procuring arbitrary prosperity to one favoured country, and depressing

the victim states with whom she holds a mercantile intercourse. *This* may be the miserable theory of *traders*, but it is certainly not the enlightened and equitable theory of trade. It is the pride of commerce to bargain with nature, and pursue plenty over the globe. By this glorious and benevolent order of human affairs, the inequalities of production are insensibly adjusted, and the errors and avarice of *men* are prevented from disturbing the happiness and industry of mankind. The criteria that are commonly assumed by superficial inquirers into the progressive prosperity of nations, are custom-house documents. These are perfectly insufficient to enable us to arrive at just conclusions. In the first place, the casual excess of imports over exports, or *vice versá*, the excess of exports over imports, is a consideration perfectly immaterial. The grand point to ascertain is, that the *industry* of the country, we inhabit, should continue to increase. Whether this augmentation be effected by an additional demand for our goods from *foreign nations*, or by an additional demand *at home* for foreign commodities, is in our view wholly unimportant. We confess that we should feel very little hesitation in admitting Mr. Newenham's statement, *though unfounded in fact*, that "the balance for seven years ended 5th January, 1806, has been *against* Ireland to the amount of £7,410,730, or an annual average of £1,058,675. We are quite sure that this balance

called into action an increased portion of Irish industry, and *this* we conceive to be the only point worth discussion. If, for example, forty thousand pounds worth of additional hats be imported into Ireland, it is to be imagined that no augmented exertions have been made in Ireland, in order to earn the money, by working up the *money's-worth*, which can alone purchase these useful articles? No, Mr. Newenham, every hat so imported has been *bona fide* paid for by the *increased labour* which the purchaser previously realized in some vendible commodity or other. Now Mr. Newenham may take whichever horn of this dilemma he may chuse to grasp. He must shew either that all the imports he complains of so bitterly, were furnished *gratuitously* by the nations who produced them; or he must be compelled to acquiesce in our conviction, that they were honestly and liberally purchased by the augmented produce of Irish industry.

But not satisfied with his tremendous annual balance of £1,058,675, Mr. Newenham states peremptorily that Ireland has, moreover, annually to provide *remittances to England which exceed four millions sterling*. If Mr. Newenham mean *cash remittances*, we have only to assure him that the two foregoing sums amount together to more than half as much again as the whole specie which Ireland is supposed to possess. As the circulation of Ireland remains undiminished, we are bound

to infer that she contains some secret and exhaustless stores of specie which have hitherto escaped the investigations of financiers. We cannot avoid reminding Mr. Newenham of the celebrated and satisfactory repartee of George Faulkner, when charged with exaggerating the annual cash remittances of Ireland to Great Britain. "From whence, Mr. Faulkner, does this money come? From *home* to be sure. Have you any mines? No.—Do you possess extensive manufactures? Scarcely any.—You have then very little commercial intercourse? Just so, unhappily for us.—From whence then, Mr. Faulkner, do this gold and silver come? Come indeed! Why, from whence should it come but from the *blood* and bowels of the poor people of Ireland?" Mr. Newenham may talk as boldly as he pleases, and afflict the public with his interminable calculations, but until he recants most of his errors, he can only hope to be esteemed as the most promising pupil of the Faulkner school that has yet appeared.

But if this bugbear, the "balance of trade," must still continue to alarm us; if this "air drawn dagger" must be perpetually brandished by the sons of speculation, it is at least equitable that we should not be frightened by another consideration which is the very "shadow of a shade." These custom-house documents which prevent Mr. Newenham from sleeping tranquilly in his bed;

these custom-house documents, which indicate the imperative necessity of framing a new Irish government under the auspices of the ragged statesmen of the aggregate meeting;—all these documents we say are utterly unsafe and unsound for any thinking being to rest a single argument upon. These custom-house returns are made up from what are called the “official rates” which are merely *imaginary values*, and are used in the public accounts solely for the purpose of shewing the *annual increase* and decrease in the quantity of each article exported and imported. An annual average of the *current prices* of articles exported or imported would enable us to ascertain with considerable accuracy the trading relations betwixt Great Britain and Ireland: But a series of supposititious rates ever varying and yet never approaching towards the truth, cannot afford the slightest ground for rational inference.—In order to evince more clearly the justness of the foregoing remarks, the reader is requested to examine the following contrasted account of the real and official values of imports and exports in the year 1808.

	<i>Official Value.</i>			<i>Real Value.</i>		
Exports	£5,696,897	5	5¼	£12,577,517	10	11
Imports	£7,129,507	11	1¾	£ 8,860,325	12	4

We have very little faith in figures, but still we cannot withhold our concurrence from the cheering demonstration of Irish prosperity which this

account presents to us. The increase of our commerce is indeed wonderful. The average amount of exports during the three years 1796, 7, and 8, may be seen in the following account, which the reader is requested to compare with the previously cited account for the year 1808.

<i>Official Value.</i>	<i>Real Value.</i>
Exports £4,435,208	£6,121,757

In relation to the arrangements of the Union we entertain some opinions altogether different from those held by Mr. Newenham, or even by Sir Francis D'Ivernois. We have no hesitation in avowing, that the commercial articles of the act of Union were framed in a too servile spirit of compliance with the absurd apprehensions of the Irish traders, that *their* interests would suffer from the operation of the Union, unless secured by legislative interference. In obedience to this foolish and fearful conviction, the minister who effected the Union, conceded the enactment of numerous "protecting duties" on fabrics of British manufacture, in order to quiet the avaricious alarms prevailing among the manufacturers of similar fabrics in Ireland. In consequence of this system a great portion of the capital and industry of Irish traders has been diverted into unprofitable channels where it would not naturally have flowed. The "protecting duties" act as stimulants to the skill of British manufacturers, while they delude the Irish

into a vain and improvident confidence in the sale of their inferior goods. The British cottons and woollens are poured into Ireland, and in spite of unreasonable duties, are sold in the Irish market on cheaper terms than similar articles worked up on our own soil. The Irish manufacturer is thus subjected to a sort of endemic poverty from which his utmost exertions can never effectually relieve him.*

Mr. Newenham is very desirous to impress on the Irish nation, that the retardation of their improvement in agriculture, manufactures, and commerce is wholly attributable to the oppressions of Great Britain. We are by no means partial to the policy pursued by Great Britain in relation to Ireland previously to the Union; but we are very doubtful that the prosperity of the latter country was impeded by direct and positive tyranny, on the part of England. The truth is, that British Statesmen were, until the latter part of the last century, very like all other statesmen; i. e. completely unacquainted with the real principles of political economy. They conceived their duty to

* It must however be recollected that the minister who carried the Union, had many difficulties to surmount, and was consequently compelled to make many sacrifices to prejudice. "It is the privilege of philosophers," says Mr. Burke, "to conceive their diagrams in geometric accuracy; but the engineer must often impair the symmetry, as well as simplicity of his machine in order to overcome the irregularities of friction and resistance."

consist in cultivating the distinct and peculiar capabilities which were supposed to exist in Great Britain and Ireland; and in conformity to this principle they committed perpetual violations on the natural order of industry in both countries. Ireland was obliged to commute the destruction of her flourishing woollen manufacture, for the exclusive monopoly of the linen market. Other examples might be enumerated proving rather the ignorance of the times than the harshness of the British government and Legislature.*

But it will scarcely be believed that Mr. Newenham, the determined opponent of all systems of commercial restraint and regulation; Mr. Newenham, the violent and vindictive enemy to all schemes of interference with trading interests, is himself the proposer of a plan for the professed melioration of Ireland, the most arbitrary and unjust in its principle of any which the annals of impolicy record. The project is neither more nor

* It is curious and instructive to pursue the consequences of the same pernicious system of tampering with *individual* and general interests, in the various European states. "La société (Ecnomique de Madrid,) says an enlightened author "en examinant la législation Castillane, relativement à l'agriculture, n'a pu se garantir d'un sentiment d'effroi, à la vue de la multitude de loix que renferment nos codes, sur un objet si simple. Osera-t-elle prononcer que la majeure partie de ces loix a toujours été, et est encore, ou totalement contraire, ou extrêmement nuisible, ou tout au moins inutile à leur objet?" Jovellanos. Rapport sur un projet de Loi Agraire.

less than to improve and extend the tillage of Ireland by means of extraordinary bounties, *so as to confine her industry and capital to agriculture*. The immediate effect of these bounties would be, to wrest from trading pursuits, the capital which affords employment and subsistence to many hundred thousands of Irish artizans. It is a question whether the folly or the iniquity of such a plan be most reprehensible. The re-action of commerce upon the interests of agriculture is one of the principal advantages which spring from that system. Independent of the benefits accruing to agriculture from the quickening influence of commercial competition; mercantile profits are ultimately destined for investment in landed possessions. This year's realizer of a *plum*, is the next year's proprietor of an estate. The incessant fluctuation of property tends more nearly to an equal distribution of wealth. Of all improvers of land, men in trade are the most active and successful. A mere agriculturist can, generally speaking, expend in improvements only the savings of his income; but a trader has a *capital* with which he is enabled to speculate, and augment the productive powers of his land.

But these violent projects of Mr. Newenham are perfectly in unison with that precipitate and unthinking turn of mind which impels him to anathematise the Union after the large and liberal experience furnished by the ten years action of

that great national measure. It is to be hoped that Mr. Newenham was not aware of the dangers arising from the promulgation of such doctrines as he has recently circulated among the uninformed classes of the Irish people. At the aggregate meeting in Dublin for the purpose of procuring the repeal of the union, all the facts and arguments made use of by the popular orators were obtained from Mr. Newenham's work*. From that mass of garbled statements and ignorant inferences every flaming agitator has been enabled to borrow materials for invective and misrepresentations. From thence every disaffected journalist has transferred into his columns the substance of Mr. Newenham's unjust and unfounded speculations.†

Mr. Newenham having proved to his own satisfaction, that the ruin of Ireland must necessarily result from an injurious balance of trade; he next proceeds to shew the pernicious consequen-

* The aggregate meeting is forgotten already. It had not as Dr. Johnson phrases it "Vitality enough to preserve it from putrefaction." *Such* crowds are easily collected in every metropolis. "Nam semper in civitate, says Sallust, quibus opes nullæ sunt, bonis invident, malos extollunt; vetera odere, nova exoptant; odio suarum rerum mutari omnia student; turba atque seditionibus sine cura aluntur."

† Il est certains esprits dont les sombres pensées,
Sont d'un nuage epais toujours embarrassées;
Le jour de la raison ne le sauroit percer,
Avant donc que d'ecrire, apprenez à penser.

BOILEAU.

ces arising from the increased number of absentees, and from the augmented payments in London occasioned by the interest, annuities, and management of the Irish debt. In looking over Mr. Newenham's book the most careless reader is struck with alarm and astonishment that Ireland should be compelled and enabled to bear so much *ruining*, as that terrifying author is anxious to demonstrate. Destroyed by absentees; destroyed by the Union; destroyed by debt, and destroyed by taxation; how Mr. Newenham is the business of life carried on in this most miserable of all countries? We shall endeavour to furnish an answer to this important query.

ABSENTEES.

MR. Newenham's hypothesis respecting the remittances of Ireland is, if possible, still more chimerical and extravagant than his theory founded in the absurd fallacy of the "balance of trade." "The number of absentees," says Mr. Newenham, "has manifestly been much increased by the Union. The amount of the revenue remitted to them, according to the opinion of Mr. Puget, delivered before the exchange committee in 1804,

was £2,000,000, an amount which several intelligent men are disposed to consider as actually below the truth.—If to that vast sum there be added £1,517,886 12 9½, being the actual amount of the interest, annuities, and management of the Irish public debt payable in London—the future demands of Britain on Ireland, when those demands shall cease to be covered as at present by a vast annual influx of money into the latter, in the shape of a loan, will appear to be a subject eminently worthy of early and serious consideration, on the part of those who exercise the powers of government.” Now in our humble judgment these considerations so alarmingly stated by Mr. Newenham, require neither the attention nor the interference of “those who exercise the powers of government;” nor can we possibly anticipate any ill-consequences to this country except from the adoption of such a meddling and ignorant policy as Mr. Newenham would prescribe in relation to the exchanges between Great Britain and Ireland.

The foreign remittances of Ireland are partly employed, according to Mr. Newenham, in paying to the absentee proprietors of land the rents of their estates, and partly in providing for the interest of her debt payable in London. As bullion cannot be remitted for these purposes, an excess of exports must be produced adequate to the discharge of this expenditure.—It is the opinion of Mr. Newenham, and “several intelligent persons,”

that for this excess of exports no return of value is made to Ireland; but that both her revenue and her capital are consumed in providing a fund sufficient to defray her foreign expenses.

Now it appears to us most clearly, that in framing this hypothesis Mr. Newenham and his friends have fallen into a very obvious error, viz. that of confounding *foreign remittances* with foreign expenditure. These gentlemen are indignant that *no commercial equivalents* should be returned for the before-mentioned remittances, but we cannot be induced to waste so much anger, being most thoroughly convinced, that the equivalents demanded, *are furnished by the produce of the estates possessed by absentees*. We will suppose that A. is an absentee residing at Bath, and that rents to the amount of £3000 are annually remitted to him. His agent B. resides, for example at Limerick, and there receives the produce of A's estate, which he hands to C. a banker in Dublin, for bills drawn upon a commercial or banking house in London. This transaction seems in our comprehension, to be regularly commercial in all its parts. The landed proprietor has shifted his income, having first realized the produce of his estates at home. The remote residence of the landlord is purely *an accidental circumstance*, and cannot alter the nature of this commerce. It will only render it necessary to export that portion of manufactured produce destined to replace his rent, and

which he would otherwise have consumed at home. We should recollect that the rent of the landlord *must* be paid wherever he may reside. If a proprietor of land situated in Kerry, thinks proper to reside in Dublin, are we therefore justified in concluding that the income he spends in town has been obtained, without equivalent, from the country? certainly not. The *money* he spends in Dublin is the amount of the produce of his estates in Kerry, *and which produce will remain in that county* unless the new proprietors shall dispose of it elsewhere for new equivalents. We dare say that the sages who animate and adorn the district just alluded to; the Newenhams who enlighten those rocky and rugged regions, are firmly convinced that every shilling spent by Lord Kenmare, or any other Kerry nobleman in Dublin, is, in point of fact, robbed from the unhappy dwellers in Killarney and Tralee. We must endeavour strenuously to dissipate this most deplorable delusion.—The sum and substance of our statement is comprized in the position, that *Ireland has not lost, nor ever will lose*, a single farthing from the non-residence of her landed proprietors. We must again assert that the remittance of two millions from Ireland to England is a process precisely alike to that of remitting two millions from the several counties of Ireland to the metropolis. If *production* do not go on, it is perfectly obvious, that *money or money's worth* cannot be received by

the proprietor of lands; but so long as those lands shall continue to be sown and stocked, so long will the landlord be entitled to receive his rent wherever he may wish to reside. The grand error of Mr. Newenham consists in the supposition, that the resources of Ireland are drained to supply absentees. The sums, or the commodities destined to procure sums remitted to absentees, can no more be called a *drain*, than a rivulet flowing from a perennial spring can be called so. If indeed the estates of absentees afforded no produce, and the rest of the land were taxed in order to remit them the price of their subsistence in England, we should have no hesitation in calling *such* a tax a drain, and a very great and unjustifiable drain: but the simple and equitable process of *transferring* the real and *bona fide* property of absentees, is by no means liable to the same objections.

In answer to the statement respecting the export of rude and manufactured produce to England in order to cover the amount of bills and notes drawn in favour of absentees, it has been urged, "what manufactured produce is exported from various parts of Ireland, from Munster for example? Wheat, oats, barley, butter, beef, pork and live cattle are the exports of the southern provinces, and if rents were not remitted out of the country, our peasants would consume at home their own corn, butter, beef, &c. &c."

This objection will require but a very short examination. The reader will no doubt be aware that industry possesses a very natural and powerful property, viz. that of attracting to itself most of the good things of this life, whether consisting in food or clothing, or whatsoever else may conduce to superior comfort or even luxury. Now, though this property is not altogether so active in Ireland as elsewhere, it still works with considerable energy. In the North, for example, a linen manufacture is carried on more extensively than any similar branch in Europe. The artizans employed in this manufacture obtain very high wages, and as their occupation precludes them from expending much labour in the cultivation of "wheat, oats, and barley," they have not the smallest objection to purchase these and other necessary articles of food from the peasants of Munster or Leinster or Connaught. Now if all the absentees were to return to-morrow, it is asserted that the foregoing order would still be preserved, and that not a single peasant in Munster would be enabled to grace his meals, or gratify his palate with an ounce more of beef, pork, butter, corn, or bacon, than he casually procures at present. To shew this more clearly to the reader, he is requested to examine the subsequent case. A peasant living, let us say, at Mallow in the county of Cork, holds a farm of twenty acres from Mr. M'Squander, residing at Cheltenham. The amount of the rent is £32 per ann. This sum the

tenant must make up for the landlord *out of the produce of the twenty acres*. He takes this produce to the neighbouring market, where, he finds a purchaser in some opulent speculator, who forwards the corn or the cattle to *another* market in Ireland, where higher prices are given by manufacturers.—The manufacturer works up a surplus quantity of linen, or woollen, or cotton goods in order to replace his expenditure in articles of food, and sends them when manufactured to the English markets. In the mean time our tenant sends up his £32, being part of the produce we have just followed, to Mr. M'Squander's agent, residing in Dublin. The agent remits the amount by means of a bill drawn, perhaps, on the buyers of Irish linens in England, and the last round of the commercial ladder is thus securely gained. But we may drop one step in order to vary the argument.—Let us suppose, that the bullocks and pigs fattening at Mallow are driven to Cork, and shipped for the English markets; it by no means follows that the Hibernian peasants would become more sleek and jolly in their appearance in consequence of a restriction on such exportation. If the exportation of cattle should be prevented this year, the graziers would soon accommodate their stocks to the lessened consumption and demand, the ensuing year. But every person conversant with the history of Ireland will find that one of the darling objects of the Irish

people was to obtain entire freedom for this exportation. In the year 1666, during the vice-royalty of Ormond, a violent act was passed by the English parliament prohibiting the importation of Irish cattle into England. The whole Irish nation was immediately in a flame. Petitions were forwarded from every quarter beseeching the English parliament to reconsider their measure. Ormond, too, remonstrated strongly against this law. "The king," says Hume, "was so much convinced of the justness of Ormond's reasons, that he used all his interest to oppose the bill; and he openly declared that he could not give his consent to it with a safe conscience." But the commons were resolute in their purpose, and passed this foolish and pernicious bill, which Hume adds, "brought great distress upon the Irish." Such were the proceedings in those times in opposition to a measure which the ignorant agitators of the present day would seek indirectly to revive.

But the truth is, that the loss sustained by Ireland in consequence of the non-residence of her landed proprietors, is by no means a loss of property or pecuniary advantages. It is the absence of liberal instruction, of moral example, and of active intelligence on the part of her patricians, that she has cause to lament. The country, as has been truly and eloquently said by the author of "*Sketches of the State of Ireland*,"

“is *widowed* of her natural protectors.”* She is deprived of the energies which this estranged and expatriated body of her aristocracy would not fail to develope. From hence arise many of the evils under which her people continue to labour. There are no elements from which an honourable and judicious magistracy can be selected. There is no impartial and intelligent publick by whom the measures of any wise and conciliating government can be fairly and fully appreciated. The subordinate offices of the state too, which should be the patrimony of the respectable and well-informed classes of the community, are of necessity conferred on a race of men, whose claims do not include even the prospect of rendering services to their country. But deeply as every Irishman must regret these evils, we are firm in our conviction that no injury arising from their operation is so severe as the blind and improvident projects of Mr. Newenham and his adherents would quickly become. Why should Mr. Newenham proscribe absentees in order to forward his plan for the repeal of the union? Is he aware of the monstrous tyranny which his doctrines, in relation to this subject, unquestionably tend to? We dis-

* Of the author above alluded to, the writer's friendship would induce him to say much—patriotic pride would impel him to say more. But the approbation of the country has anticipated even the present humble panegyric.

claim all disposition to insult or to injure; but we assert, that *the evils which exist in this country have been occasioned by the misgovernment and pernicious policy pursued in relation to Ireland, for one hundred years, and which the Union, and the system resulting from that Union are daily mitigating—and will ultimately remove.* In order to remedy national grievances, the government proceeds sagely and temperately in the great work of reform. The members who compose that government seem strongly impressed with the wisest of all convictions, that, meliorations can be effected only by the action of a moderate and healing policy, which accomplishes *much* by not aiming at *too much*.*

But independent of the foregoing considerations, the reader may be sufficiently cheered by the assurance, that the evils connected with the absentee system *have in no degree increased since the Union.* On comparing the lists of absentees moved for by Messrs. Flood, Forbes, Ogle, and Co. with the estimates recently laid before the public, it will be found, that taking into view the proportional increase of wealth and population in

* “ Vous sentez bien que je desire á-peu-près les mêmes choses et bien d'autres : tout cela demande du temps et de la reflexion ; J'ai toujours été tres content quand, dans mes chagrins, j'ai obtenu une partie des soulagemens que je voulais ; je suis aujourd'hui trop heureuse.”—VOLTAIRE : “ *Voyage de la Raison.* ”

Ireland, the relative number of absentees has diminished since the year 1800. It will be shewn hereafter, how this number is likely to sustain successive and salutary reductions.

THE IRISH LOAN.

In page 293 of his book, Mr. Newenham observes, that the principal pecuniary demands of Britain on Ireland have been *covered* by a vast annual influx of money into the latter, in the shape of *loans*. It is for Mr. Newenham to explain how the publick loans could have covered the three principal demands, of the absentees, of the interest upon the Irish national debt payable in London, and of the unfavourable balance of trade, the whole amount of which, Mr. Newenham computes at £5,246,497.

Leaving Mr. Newenham to reconcile his conflicting statements, it may be useful to inquire into the real grounds of the common assertion, that the circumstance of the Irish loan being raised in Britain is pernicious to the interests of Ireland.

It is undoubtedly true, that the loans which every government requires for the support of extraordinary expenses, and that the augmented

taxation which it becomes necessary to impose in order to defray the interest of these loans, must check the natural progress of national prosperity. If, however, the necessities of the state must be provided for by means of a loan, and if those for whose services the loan is required are incapable of making the requisite advances, it is surely the most obvious policy to levy the principal from the superabundant opulence of the richest part of the empire, and to rely, for the payment of the interest, on the produce of such taxes as it may be prudent or convenient to impose. Funds must no doubt be sent from Ireland to discharge the interest of her debt due in London; but this transmission of property from one part of the empire to the other, cannot be attended with disastrous consequences. The commodities exported by Ireland for the payment of her debt due in London, do not indeed produce any *commercial equivalents* in return; but this is not imputable to the circumstance of their being sent out of the country.

If the creditors of Ireland resided in Dublin, a fund, to satisfy their claims, must be raised from the annual produce of her land and labour: her debt, therefore, will equally obstruct her prosperity, whether it be paid in Dublin, or remitted to London. Mr. Newenham and several other writers evidently confound the *natural consequences of all debt*, with the circumstances

to which, in the case of Ireland, it is accidentally allied. A publick debt, like a private one, is undoubtedly attended with evils, and the only rational mitigation of those evils seems to consist in contracting the debt upon the most advantageous terms. The best place for effecting a money bargain is where money abounds. This is the primary object; the residence of the creditor is a consideration very subordinate, if not, indeed, wholly immaterial,

COBBETT

ON THE

AFFAIRS OF IRELAND.

A NEW combatant has started into the crowded *arena* of Irish politics, and we confess ourselves to be rather rejoiced than otherwise at his appearance. In spite of all the abuse which is squandered on William Cobbett, and in spite of the profuse vulgarity with which he endeavours to repel it, we are disposed to place him higher in the scale of excellence than any political writer of the present day. Active, acute, and energetic, he is enabled to overwhelm most of his opponents by the unwearied exertion of these qualities. The homely and familiar perspicuity of his style; the clear and unembarrassed order which prevails in all his statements;—these merits which his journal unquestionably possesses, are sufficient to secure a great portion of interest and perhaps of popularity for every thing that proceeds from his pen.

But willing as we are to concede these claims to Mr. Cobbett, we cannot afford the same toleration to his countless political heresies,—to his unaccountable and unprincipled mutations of

opinion,—to his successive treacheries in relation to every man and every set of men whose cause he has at any time espoused and advocated. Impressed as we are with a saddening conviction of the inconstancy and fugitiveness of human judgments, we must, notwithstanding, be permitted to wonder, that within the period of thirteen years, Mr. Cobbett should undergo the melancholy and marvellous changes from tory to whig, from royalist to revolutionist, from flaming and devoted loyalty to rank and riotous jacobinism.—We are far from saying that these political *harlequinades* do not constitute much of the amusement to be found in Mr. Cobbett's journal; but we do say that this excessive and unreasonable versatility should teach us extreme caution in the investigation of his varying opinions. He furnishes us with no accurate and unalterable standard by which we can regulate our political decisions. Instead of assisting us to *measure*, he is himself most in need of *measurement*. But independent of all this, there is another consideration which should materially weaken the influence of Cobbett. We mean his wretched ignorance concerning numberless topics which his presumption impels him to discuss. Relying with blind and improvident confidence on the intrepid vigour of his understanding, he thunders forth his dogmas upon every subject without condescending to examine what has been said and written before he himself

could either read or write. This is the cardinal vice of all Cobbett's compositions. Because *all* political questions are connected more or less remotely with the interests of all, he is absurd enough to believe that *every person* is qualified to decide upon them. Because the ocean is free, he imagines that all ships should voyage with the same safety and celerity.

Mr. Cobbett entertains a strange notion that the plain and positive tendency of learning is to disguise truth. We are in no degree partial to the "black letter dogs," but we cannot divest ourselves of a certain reverence for that particular description of knowledge which is founded in enlarged principles and extensive views. If Mr. Cobbett persists in refusing to read Adam Smith, we must beg leave to evince a little scepticism respecting his acquaintance with political economy. If he raves about the doctrines of Mr. Malthus, we must request him to peruse the work of that enlightened philosopher, and become sane. If he scatters his wretched speculations upon the funding system—upon parliamentary reform—upon national defence—and, above all, upon the affairs of Ireland, we trust that no man, gifted with reason, will surrender himself to the miserable theories of Mr. Cobbett, until he shall have consulted other authorities.

In the Register of the 29th of September, Mr. Cobbett has favoured us with a long article

in reprobation of another article on the Aggregate Meeting, which appeared in the Morning Post of the preceding day. We should premise in fairness towards our readers, that the editor of the Morning Post, whoever he may be, seems as much informed on the state of Ireland, as on the politics of the Pellew Islands. He appears to have learned from some authentic quarter, that the Union between Great Britain and Ireland was effected A.D. 1800; that the said Union was a most desirable and delectable measure, and *therefore* should be lauded in peals of panegyric by every quiet citizen, and every government journal. We have hitherto proclaimed our conviction, that the freedom, security, and happiness of this country, depend on the continued operation of the Act of Union; but while endeavouring to enforce this opinion, we shall beg leave to decline the alliance of the Morning Post. We commit to the London editor the charge of castigating Mr. Cobbett upon every topic except that of Irish affairs, which *we* cannot yield to any other hands.

Mr. Cobbett is sufficiently clear-sighted to perceive that the recent clamours for the repeal of the union had their origin in commercial distresses. But precluded by his ignorance of political economy from tracing these mercantile embarrassments to the right source, he imputes them to the decrees of Bonaparte; to the in-

creased number of absentees ; and to the augmentation of the Irish publick debt, in consequence of the union.

Now, without teizing ourselves or our readers by a separate exposure of each of Mr. Cobbett's foregoing errors, we shall endeavour, once for all, to present the Irish publick with an equitable and comprehensive statement of the real causes which led to the recent trading distresses, and to the consequent outcry for the repeal of the union.

For some time previous to these distresses, we had watched the operations of Irish trade with great solicitude ; and we perceived, or at least we thought we perceived, that considerable difficulties and derangements were likely to ensue. There was nothing profound in this prediction. It arose simply from the application of certain established mercantile principles, to facts with which the events of every succeeding day sorrowfully supplied us. The first indication we disliked was the prodigious and unnatural extension of paper credit. *Not that* paper credit which gives life, and vigour and facility to the movements of *real* trade ; but that false and factitious system of credit which weakens the springs of just speculation, and expels the honest and prudent trader from the market which his industry has a right to command. The foundation of this system was laid by that cele-

brated measure which restricted the National Banks of England and Ireland from making payments in specie. Concerning the original necessity which might have existed for framing this measure, we shall enter into no details. The main object of our inquiry is to shew the relation which it bears to the late distresses ; and we trust that we shall succeed in doing so.

When the directors of the Bank of Ireland became vested with this unlimited power of issuing their notes, it was evident that great discretion would be required in order to prevent injurious results. The profits of the banking trade consist in the extent of its discount. The measure of this discount had been hitherto restrained and regulated by the imperative obligation on the part of the company to pay their notes on demand. This powerful and wholesome check being removed, it was obvious that the issues of the directors could be limited in future only by their own prudence and precaution. These are slender ties when the interests of men interfere, and the *immediate interest* of the bank was to discount as largely as possible.

Towards the latter end of the year 1807, several political events concurred to render the Irish traders more than commonly desirous of this enlarged liberality of discount. The removal of the Portuguese government to the Brazils opened, at least in appearance, a vast and untrodden field

for commercial speculation. A few months subsequently, the universal resistance of the Spanish people to the usurpations of Bonaparte, indicated the prospect of boundless mercantile advantages from the markets of South America. Cheered and excited by these anticipations, the Irish traders hastened to avail themselves of the prodigality of the Bank of Ireland. Deluded by the facility of discount they extended their concerns—some of them imprudently—some of them extravagantly—all of them unwisely. A general and pernicious system of *overtrading* took place. The merchant embarrassed the manufacturer; the manufacturer involved the subordinate dealers. Their credit became impaired, and their bills were protested. In this general distress, the Bank directors felt no small alarm. They were conscious *that they had themselves over-traded most enormously in the article of discount*, and, in order to avoid the effects of greater error, they determined to reduce their discounts altogether. Our readers must be aware how suddenly this determination operated. The merchants were disabled from complying with their engagements to the manufacturers. The manufacturers were compelled to discharge their labourers. These links of the commercial chain being thus rudely dissevered, every species of distress quickly appeared. Confidence was destroyed, common interest was dissolved, and industry was checked in its

course. Can we then continue to wonder why the consequences of these distresses should even yet be felt!*

We have been the more precise and particular in this statement, because we have long perceived that the utmost misconception prevails respecting this subject. Whilst the agitators of the publick peace are engaged in imputing our distresses to the misconduct of government—to the removal

* Nothing tends more decisively to sustain the above statement than the enormous glut of all Irish manufactures. It is remarkable, too, and the fact indicates more clearly that the distresses had their origin in *unjust* speculation, that manufactures were worked up for the supposed markets of Brazil, which cannot be disposed of *at any price* at home. There are at present in the linen-hall what are called “cotton linings,” to the amount of one hundred and fifty thousand pounds prime cost. Hastily manufactured, by means of a floating and fictitious capital, these cottons are of so inferior a quality, that the best are not worth ninepence a yard. But the owners cannot obtain a market at fivepence a yard. In the woollen trade the overtrading of speculators was equally evident. The writer of a recent pamphlet has explained, with sufficient accuracy, the process by which woollen goods of every description were crowded into the warehouses of the Dublin manufacturers. He also predicts very injurious results from the *forced consumption* of Irish cloth, promoted by the late Lord Mayor. It is to be hoped that his anticipations are exaggerated; but it cannot be denied that the *principle* of his Lordship’s interference was utterly absurd, though the intention was highly benevolent and laudable.—See “A short Inquiry into the present Distresses of the Irish Traders.”

of our legislature—or to the hostility of our enemy, it appears to us to be the most cheering of all considerations that our traders can take the most part of this blame to themselves—*because they have the remedy in their own hands.* If it be proved that their distresses have been occasioned by no severe and deeply-seated evil in the frame of our Government or Constitution, but on the contrary have arisen from *the neglect or mismanagement of their own private and personal affairs*, then do we think that such persons should rest satisfied and tranquil. They should abstain from all groundless accusations against their rulers, and occupy themselves zealously and effectually to improve their interests by efforts of unceasing and undisturbed industry.

There is something natural, we will allow, in endeavouring to shift the shame and reproach of our errors from ourselves, and to refer them to the faults and follies of those who govern us. But we earnestly intreat our fellow-countrymen to resist this most false and pernicious of all sophistries. In these free, and, *as we think*, most happy countries, the interests of individuals are so completely unfettered, that every failure which takes place is solely imputable to the ill-management or ill-fortune of the person to whom it may occur. Who looks to Government for the advancement of any mercantile speculation

in which he may be engaged? Why then should he charge to the account of that Government the losses which his own imprudence or improvidence may have occasioned? Let us then "lay not the flattering unction to our souls," that the rulers of the state are enabled or obliged to amend our condition or adjust our interests. These prosperous results can be obtained *only* by the persevering pursuit of independent and unassisted industry.*

But the error of Mr. Cobbett, and the falsehood of the Irish journalists, consists in the assumption, that the *general prosperity* of Ireland has received a shock, the effects of which can be counteracted *only by the Repeal of the Union*. Now it requires very little sagacity to expose the folly of Mr. Cobbett's assertion. To any one acquainted with trade, it will be obvious, that the suffering traders before alluded to, did not compose a part of the prudent and opulent mercantile community.

* Perhaps most of these delusions may be traced to the folly of the Irish government and legislature previous to the Union, in disturbing the order of trade by frequent and ruinous interpositions. "I have often remarked," says Mr. Burke, "that the leading vice of the French monarchy, was in good intention ill-directed, and a restless desire of governing too much. The hand of authority was seen in every thing, and in every place. *All therefore that happened amiss in the course even of domestic affairs, was attributed to the Government.*"—"Thoughts and Details on Scarcity."

Opulent they could not have been, for their speculations were undertaken upon fictitious, not to say fraudulently procured, capitals. *Prudent* it would be absurd to term those men who squandered the funds thus dishonestly obtained in the furtherance of schemes equally unjustifiable and irrational. The families, dependants, and commercial connexions of such persons have been reduced to great and deserved distress; but the cautious, respectable, and wealthy traders of this country have not sustained the slightest injury from the late mercantile embarrassments.

But Ireland, says Mr. Cobbett, has linked herself to a country whose debt has augmented enormously, and *therefore* the debt of Ireland has received an unfair increase in consequence of the Union. Now, in answer to this statement and inference, we beg Mr. Cobbett will have the goodness to refer to the articles of the Act of Union, and he will find that the contribution of Ireland to the expenditure of the empire for twenty years after the Union, is in the proportion of two parts to fifteen. He will also find (article 7.) "that all monies to be raised after the Union in peace or war, for the service of the United Kingdom, by the Parliament thereof, shall be considered as a joint debt, and the charges thereof shall be borne by the respective countries, *in the proportion of their respective contributions.*"

Now we will ask what were the equivalents obtained by this arrangement? Deliverance from anarchy; equalization of commercial advantages, and substitution of a more healing and conciliating policy than had been pursued in relation to Ireland since the reign of William the Third. For these incalculable benefits we have submitted to a most lenient system of additional taxation, occasioned by the prosecution of a war which the nation believes to be both just and necessary. Now Mr. Cobbett and his admirers on this side of the water, are bound to shew, that the policy of the empire has sustained a change since the Union, and that Ireland was not, under even her former circumstances, liable to the expenses incurred by the action of that policy.

We have already explained so fully the prevailing errors respecting absentees, that we feel almost ashamed to obtrude this topic again upon the attention of our readers. We will just mention, for the edification of Mr. Cobbett, that in our opinion Ireland is not in the slightest degree impoverished by her remittances to absentees. So long as the property thus remitted shall continue to be raised from the augmenting produce of the Irish soil, that produce will be an ample equivalent for the bills and notes forwarded to absentees. Does Mr. Cobbett, for example,

imagine, that the *money* with which he purchases divers articles to solace himself in Newgate, has been obtained without equivalent from the good people of Botley? Nothing more unlikely.—Mr. Cobbett's cash has arisen from the sale of hay, oats, &c. &c. produced on his farm in Hampshire, and he is at liberty to *spend it* wherever he may chuse, though his *personal purchases* are limited, unluckily, to a very narrow circuit.

The simple fact is, that the loss sustained by Ireland, and we would fain hope by Botley, consists in the absence of intelligent and active proprietors, who might diffuse industry and information among the beings who look up to them for instruction and example.

We shall endeavour to explain hereafter, *how* such proprietors will, in no distant period, be won back to their native shores, by the influencing operation of the Union.

We shall now enter on the examination of a topic concerning which, a great variety of opinions has for some time past prevailed among political characters in this country. The opinions entertained in England on the subject alluded to, are sufficiently explained in the following citation from the *Morning Post*, in Mr. Cobbett's *Journal*.

On the 13th of September last, the *Morning Post* of that day contained a long article on national defence, in which the writer introduced the ensuing paragraph:—"Ireland indeed demands an army. Worried and distracted as she is by French conspiracies and machinations, ministers need not be told that there alone is Great Britain vulnerable."

Now, the reader is entreated to remark the host of appalling considerations which these frightful assertions involve. If the writer of the *Morning Post* be sincere in the foregoing statement he unquestionably means, *that there at present exists in Ireland "conspiracies and machinations" for the purpose of establishing French dominion in that country.* Is this the most approved method of tranquillizing the disquietudes of Ireland? are the vagrant affections of her people to be fixed by such representations as these; libelling their loyalty and indicting even their reason? No, we will not believe it. Ireland may be irritated; Ireland may be discontented; but Ireland can never become so blindly and so basely hostile to her own interests and honour as to submit herself to the iron yoke of Napoleon. But this cheering conclusion must be sustained like every other just conclusion, by reasoning and investigation. It will, therefore, be requisite to lay before the reader a summary of the principal arguments advanced by those persons

who assert the existence of a "French party" in Ireland.

In August 1807, two bills were brought into the House of Commons by Lord Castlereagh, entitled the Irish Insurrection and Disarming bills. The professed object of these bills was to furnish the Irish government with augmented authority for *proclaiming* such districts in Ireland as indicated appearances of disaffection; and to enable the magistracy to make searches for arms, "wherever they might entertain suspicions of the concealment of the same."* The opposition to these bills was violent and unremitting. It was said, and truly said, that *no case* had been made out by which the terrible necessity for suspending the constitution of Ireland was sufficiently established: that the proceedings of the special commission appointed to try insurgents in the counties of Sligo and Tipperary, had satisfactorily shewn, that the ordinary powers and exertions of law were fully adequate to repress every symptom of popular commotion: and that the obvious tendency of the bills in question, was to substitute an arbitrary and fearful system of severity, for the gentle and constitutional controls which the firm administration of the laws had hitherto afforded.

It was stated, on the other hand, that the opera-

* It has been said that draughts of the bills in question were found in the office of Mr. Elliot, chief secretary during the Duke of Bedford's Lieutenancy.

tion of the existing laws was not sufficiently vigorous and effective to secure the tranquillity of Ireland: that the ends of justice had been invariably defeated by the insurmountable difficulty of procuring witnesses to substantiate legal prosecutions: and that the temporary interruptions which the constitutional administration of the laws might sustain, would be amply compensated by the increased securities accruing to the loyal part of the Irish population.

Desirous as the government seemed to be of the passing of these bills, the hostile arguments before enumerated, were not wholly without influence. The declaration, however, of Mr. Grattan was decisive. That great man, departing from all his former political views, did not hesitate to express his decided conviction, "that the existence of a strong French party in Ireland," clearly and impetively evinced the necessity for framing measures similar at least in spirit to the bills then lying before the house. Now we do not quarrel with Mr. Grattan for stating this opinion; we do not entertain the slightest doubt of the sincerity with which he espoused the principle of these bills; but we must inquire what were the grounds on which he adapted his conviction. Did he bring forward any facts to fortify his assertion? Did he produce documents tending to prove that the partial disturbances which disgraced two, or at most three, districts in Ireland had been fomented by French

agency? And above all was he prepared to shew, that *all discontents* prevailing among various classes of misguided individuals in Ireland, were resolvable into a desire for becoming the tributaries of France? These queries can be answered only by stating, that Mr. Grattan never produced a shadow of evidence to sustain his assertions, and the natural inference, is, that he was utterly unable to do so.

Now, denying as we do, most loudly and peremptorily, that a French party—that a party in short organized for the purpose of establishing French dominion did exist, or now exists in Ireland; we are conscious that we subject ourselves to the usual query concerning the real causes of discontent or disaffection in that country. We shall answer this question with as much comprehensiveness and brevity as the afflicting extent of the subject will permit.

We feel so much assured that impolicy *on the part of England* has terminated *for ever* in relation to Ireland, that we do not hesitate to impute all the past misfortunes and all the subsisting grievances of our country to the long-continued action of that impolicy.* Till the reign of George the

* “The provinces of absolute monarchies are always better treated than those of free states. Compare the *Pais conquis* of France with Ireland, and you will be convinced of this truth; though this latter kingdom being, in a good measure, peopled

First, the Irish had been ruled by the coarse and vulgar influence of terror. From the accession of that monarch may be dated the commencement of a new system of government, more artful in its conception, more lenient in its operation, but not less pernicious in its consequences. The object of this system was to create a number of factions in Ireland, and then to govern her by means of the most powerful. The king of a party, it has been said, is the king of but half his subjects: but the English monarch was king of but *one family* in Ireland. He swayed alternately the Ponsonbies or the Beresfords; the Hutchinsons or the Fitzgeralds, and the favourite minions had the task of bribing dependents to secure their power. There was a *subinfeudation* of corruption. The throne required the subserviency of its immediate vassals, and *they* demanded subordinate submissions from their inferior and mercenary adherents.

The family in power obtained its station from the number and weight of its parliamentary supporters. The majorities were nominally those of the minister, but they were, in reality, composed of the connexions and dependents of the prevailing faction. From hence it arose that every ministerial measure was designed to advance the

from England, possesses so many rights and privileges as should naturally make it challenge better treatment than that of a conquered province.” Hume’s Essays, vol. I: page 21. Ed. 1764.

interests of the party in power. To them alone the stream of Government bounty exclusively flowed. But when this favoured family were ejected, their influence augmented by the prodigality of the executive, became proportionably dangerous to the donors.—Here then a new series of evils was generated. New resources were to be devised in order to supply counteracting corruptions. By a sort of geometrical progression in political profligacy, every change of parties encreased the complicated sum of national iniquity. Thus the aristocracy of the land was broken down into distinct masses of venality; every party had its price, and the country was ransacked for the payment.

The people—but Ireland could scarcely boast of a *people*. Her peasants groaning under the united tyranny of bad laws and pernicious usages, tore up the face of a soil which they had neither knowledge nor energy to cultivate. Her traders obstructed by jealous restrictions abroad, and by idleness and impolicy at home, formed a community of commercial paupers. To climax her woes, religious difference scattered the elements of discord with dreadful profusion over the land. The Catholic code, a system constructed with terrible ingenuity, perpetuated distrust and despair, through every generation of unfeeling persecutors, and unforgiving sufferers. Every succeeding year gave birth to some new denomination of infatuated

insurgents, who, under every variation of name, betrayed the same appetites for plunder and for blood. The *Oak Boys*, the *Steel Boys*, the *White Boys*, the *Right Boys*, were, "another and the same." Like the Tartars, they deposed their chiefs, or changed the appellation of their tribe; but they still preserved the dynasty of devastation.

Such was the state of Ireland on the accession of his present Majesty.

From this period the meliorated policy of England, and the consequent civilization of Ireland, may be said to have commenced. The continually widening breach between Great Britain and her American colonies, rendered Ireland more politically important in the view of English statesmen than she had ever before appeared. But, as soon as England evinced her *wants*, Ireland began to develope her *wishes*. An independent Irish interest sprung up, and collecting force from every faction, overwhelmed, with irresistible violence, the system of subjection by which the partizans of England had ruled and rioted for sixty years. But England found it more necessary than ever to retain Ireland, and the problem was *how?* *Not* by terror; *not* by the revival of the newly-over-thrown corruptions. A policy more moderate, more liberal, and more enlightened, was adopted and pursued. The penal code was mitigated by repeated relaxations. That malignant and ferocious bigotry which had hitherto derived its worst

impulse from the intolerance of the English government, was now softened and repressed by the wise and kindly influence of that government. Better even than all this, was the conviction daily extending itself among the higher-informed and more judicious classes of our population, that, the affections and interests of Great Britain and Ireland were capable of still closer alliance by a legislative and incorporating Union.*

But before this measure could be effected, the frame of society in Europe had sustained a fatal

* “By a Union with Great Britain, says Doctor Smith, Ireland would gain, besides the freedom of trade, other advantages much more important, and which would much more than compensate any increase of taxes that might accompany that Union. By the Union with England, the middling and inferior ranks of people in Scotland, gained a complete deliverance from the power of an Aristocracy which had always before oppressed them. By a union with Great Britain the greater part of the people of all ranks in Ireland would gain an equally complete deliverance from a much more oppressive aristocracy; an aristocracy, not founded like that of Scotland, in the natural and respectable distinctions of birth and fortune, but in the most odious of all distinctions, those of religious and political prejudices: distinctions which, more than any, animate both the insolence of the oppressors, and the hatred and indignation of the oppressed, and which commonly render the inhabitants of the same country more hostile to one another than those of different countries ever are. Without a union with Great Britain, the inhabitants of Ireland are not likely for many ages to consider themselves as one people. “Wealth of Nations,” vol. 2. page 286. Dub. Ed.

shock from the violence of the French Revolution. The contagion of spurious freedom infected even the best regulated continental states; but in Ireland, the oppressions and impolicy of five hundred years had prepared her ignorant and enthusiastic people for the pernicious designs of every political fanatic. But we must not confound the *French principles* professed by a few leaders of sedition in Ireland, with the *Irish motives* which influenced the mass of her population to second the supposed views of those leaders. Tone and Fitzgerald, our Mirabeau and Orleans, had a thousand theories modelled on the schemes of their *French* precursors; but they addressed themselves to *Irish prejudices* as the avengers of *Irish wrongs*. There was no resisting *such* an appeal. Ireland became a vast bank of discontent, on which the factious were enabled to draw without limitation. One unfortunate recurrence to the wretched policy and bigotry of former times; one unhappy attempt to govern Ireland *by means of a powerful family*, drove Lord Fitzwilliam from his ministry, and peace from our shores. Then followed the Rebellion. Oh, that this page could be for ever blotted from the book of time and of truth! But it is for the purposes of instruction that we recal, "the memory of days that are past." Of those dreadful days when the map of our land might have been recognized by its meridians of misery: When all the bonds of nature, all the ties of affection were sundered and dissolved

by the terrible influence of anarchy: When treachery and terror were the feudatories of desolation, and the spaces of the scaffold were peopled with the fugitives of the sword! We will not extend further this canvas, blackened by the hand of horror.

The termination of the Rebellion was the commencement of Irish prosperity. The Union, after severe opposition, was carried by the British ministry, and, brightening the prospects of Ireland, became the harbinger of happiness and hope. Among the countless considerations of advantage which the Union involved, the recent rebellion furnished, perhaps, the most powerful. The effect of every unsuccessful insurrection which history records, had invariably been to fling a casting weight of despotism into the scale of the conquering executive. *Væ Victis* had been the motto of all Governments, as well as all rebels. It appears to us that the Union tended in a great measure to prevent these usual consequences of Rebellion in the case of Ireland. The energies of the Empire became so connected and concentrated, that the British ministers felt justifiable in dismissing their apprehensions, and applying, without delay, the mild and curative policy of conciliation.*

* The enactment of the Irish Insurrection and Disarming Bills may appear to militate against this conclusion. But it should be recollected, that these measures originated in *Irish apprehensions*, not in British oppressions. During the late session of Parlia-

Thinking then, as we unquestionably do, that Irish discontents arise from the green soreness of former grievances, it becomes a more pleasing part of our duty to indicate the progress and prospects of melioration, and the consequent extinction of all such grievances in Ireland. And here our difference in opinion with Mr. Cobbett and his admirers must necessarily be resumed.

Whatever representations ignorant and illiberal individuals may endeavour to diffuse, there is no position more incontrovertible, than *that no country, taking every circumstance into consideration, has advanced more rapidly in prosperity than Ireland has done since the year 1800.* Within the last ten years her metropolis has been more improved than any other city in the empire. Although Dublin labours under many disadvantages, chiefly arising from the shallowness and insecurity of her harbour, and the residence of the court,*

ment Mr. Pole, the chief secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, brought in two Bills, which were passed:—one for repealing the Irish Insurrection Act, and the other for modifying the Irish Arms Act.

* “In mercantile and manufacturing towns where the inferior ranks of people are chiefly maintained by the employment of capital, they are in general industrious, sober, and thriving. In those towns which are principally supported by the constant or occasional residence of a court, and which the inhabitants are chiefly maintained by the spending of revenue they are in general idle, dissolute, and poor.—The idleness of the greater part of the people who are maintained by the expense of revenue, corrupts, it

the number of her traders in every branch has been doubled since the Union. The mercantile consequence of this is, that *individual profits* are diminished, whilst the wealth of the metropolis has been collectively augmented. As to the *country*, the benefits of the Union are still more evident and extensive. The habits of the peasantry are amended. Civilization is penetrating every where, and industry is its guide. There is even a more decisive and comprehensive indication of growing prosperity than any included in the preceding enumeration. We allude to the division and distribution of those large and boundless properties; those vast and aggregated possessions, which, like the pyramids, derived half their frightful grandeur from the surrounding waste. "The formation of small proprietorships," says Doctor Smith, "has been the fore-runner of improvement in every European state." It accompanies improvement in Ireland. We do not subject ourselves to the imputation of exaggerated statement when we assert, that within the last four years, three noblemen, Lords Headford, Courtenay, and Dundas, have disposed of estates in Ireland to the value of half a million sterling. The sales

is probable, the industry of those who ought to be maintained by capital, and renders it less advantageous to employ a capital there than in other places."—Wealth of Nations, vol. i. p. 335 and 6.

were effected by public auction and in moderate lots. Who does not see in this new arrangement the elements of a respectable and responsible Irish yeomanry, the successors of middlemen and tyrannical agents, whose oppressions hitherto defying every restraint and regulation will be silently subverted by the order of nature? The tranquillity resulting from the diffusion of property will not fail to win back the absentees so long estranged from the land of their inheritance. The laws will be respected when respectable administrators shall have been restored. Interest will promote security, and peace will be the offspring of both.

But there yet remains a topic which has occupied so frequently and so largely the attention of the empire, that to omit it, in even the humblest investigation of the affairs of Ireland would expose us to malignant or unjust constructions. We allude to Catholic Emancipation. It is so rare to meet this great question discussed with temper and moderation—so difficult to discover a statement of the Catholic case in which the passions of the partizan or the prejudices of the bigot do not occasionally break forth, that every attempt to convey liberal and conciliating opinions should be received at least with calmness and candour.

The simple consideration respecting the claims of the Catholics is, whether it be expedient to

ally four millions of our population more intimately with the interests of the state, by consenting to remove certain disabilities which they state to be grievances. They pray to be favoured with a *liability* to arrive at such honourable and lucrative offices of the state as form part of the regular ambition of every Protestant; they state their services to include the faithful discharge of every loyal and legal observance as well as those of their Protestant fellow-countrymen; and they claim to be admitted to a share in the *conduct* of a state in which they possess property and influence, and to the support of which they contribute their full proportion of resources.

Now, in the first place, it is necessary to inquire what were the grounds on which the above-mentioned disabilities were originally inflicted. The details, however offensive to our feelings, are pregnant with instruction, and even reproof.

From the period of the Reformation to that of the Revolution of 1688, Popery seems to have been considered rather as a crime, for which individuals, convicted of any overt act, were subjected to punishment, than as a system of faith, which the more powerful sect were solicitous to repress or extinguish by durable disqualifications. To celebrate mass or to attend its celebration were offences punishable by law: and every subject was liable to severe and unmiti-

gable penalties if he omitted to attend publick worship, according to the forms of the Established Church, once at least on every Sunday. Catholics, however, notwithstanding the terrible religious rancour of those times, were neither excluded from the legislature, nor exposed to any hardships, respecting the enjoyment and transference of their possessions—or the economy and regulation of their families—or their personal rights and immunities. The truth is, that the early rigours exercised in relation to the Catholics were rather meant as preventives of heresy, than as political punishments. It was reserved for the refined turpitude of another age to unite civil tyranny with religious persecution, and to make the terms of a creed, or the forms of a liturgy, the foundation of severities in this life, as well as of supposed sufferings in another.

During the reign of Elizabeth the laws against the Catholics were administered, upon the whole, with great mildness and forbearance in England; and in Ireland they remained almost a dead letter. In the reign of James the First, however, when the Protestants obtained, for the first time, a decided majority in the Parliament of the latter country, they were enforced occasionally with some circumstances of cruelty. Under Charles, the peculiar difficulties of his situation, the stern and unrelenting government of Strafford, and the authorized enormities of the English settlers, led

to those scenes of more than savage devastation which characterized the dreadful Rebellion of 1641. From this period to the complete subjugation of the rebels by Cromwell, the whole country was a prey to the most frightful disorders, which were somewhat allayed by the establishment of a ferocious military despotism. The soldiery of Cromwell settled themselves in the lands of which they had dispossessed their opponents; and at the Restoration, the Act of Settlement confirmed this desolating ejectment, by warranting the absolute transference of eight millions of acres from Irish Catholics to English Protestants.

Such was the state of servitude and penury to which the Catholics of Ireland were reduced on the accession of James II. It was natural to imagine, that with the known dispositions of this Prince in favour of Popery, he would endeavour anxiously and effectually to restore the political preponderance of this sect in Ireland. Tyrconnel, a blind and furious bigot was selected as the instrument for attaining the objects of the King. Except, however, the disarming of the Protestants, the dismissal of some officers, and the disbanding of four thousand soldiers of that persuasion, it does not appear that any very severe oppressions were exercised by the Catholics, to whom a concurrence of circumstances had now given the right of the strongest. Tyrconnel, in-

deed, had formed a scheme for calling a Parliament, in order to reverse the Act of Settlement, but he was opposed so strenuously by the moderate Catholics in the King's Council, that he was compelled to relinquish his project.

William the Third, called upon by the English people to rescue them from popery and slavery, came over from a country partially peopled with Catholics, and with an army chiefly composed of those very Catholics, to destroy the tyranny of a Popish Prince in England. The *means* by which he effected the deliverance of the people whom he came to free, indicate the beneficial consequences of a tolerating spirit. The liberties of a Protestant state were revived, affirmed, and augmented by the leader of a Catholic army, and the principles of the most liberal constitution that continues to exist, were framed under the auspices of an aid which liberality had won over to the cause of freedom.

It was natural that in this struggle the Catholics of Ireland should side with the monarch in whom all their expectations were placed. They accordingly made every effort to sustain the fallen fortunes of James, and it was not until 1691 that the Protestant government obtained the full resumption and recognition of its ascendancy by the treaty of Limerick. By the articles of that treaty, it was expressly stipulated, that "the Roman Catholics should enjoy such privileges in

the exercise of their religion as are consistent with the laws of Ireland, or as they did enjoy in the reign of Charles II; and their majesties as soon as they can summon a parliament in this kingdom, will endeavour to procure the said Roman Catholics *such further security* in that particular, as may preserve them from any disturbance on account of their religion."

In direct defiance of this solemn pledge of pacification; in peremptory violation of the sacred conditions on the faith of which the instrument was ratified by the submissions of the Irish people; three years had scarcely elapsed when the famous act for preventing the growth of Popery was passed by the English Parliament. The history of this act, though related by a crowd of respectable authorities, should nevertheless be perpetually repeated. When evils subsist for our shame, it is but fair that they should subsist for our instruction.

A party in England were in violent opposition to the government of King William, whose principles, and of course those of his ministers, were known to be enlightened and tolerant. This party resolved to make the King outrage his principles, or to subject him to the odium of protecting Popery. In order to effect their object, they purposely brought in the bill above alluded to, which they filled with a variety of absurd and wicked clauses that the ministry might be com-

pelled to risk its rejection. The court party seeing through this iniquitous scheme, determined to outwit their opponents by sending back the bill loaded with additional absurdities, that its loss might be imputed to the original framers. They, finding their follies returned upon their hands, flung them back upon their adversaries. And thus this flagitious act, glutted with the rival resentments and united injustice of two parties, neither of which intended it to pass, was finally adopted by the legislature, contrary to the real wish of all branches of it, and of all the parties that composed it. In this manner were the liberties and fortunes of their fellow-countrymen squandered away by the insolent profligacy of two powerful factions. Other oppressive measures have had their rise in the rage of retaliation or in the pitiless policy of fear; but here was an act of tyranny resulting from the wantonness and petulance of two contending parties. If it be asked why have the best energies of the empire been shorn of their full strength? Why have the worth and talents of a great proportion of her population been withered for a hundred years by the baneful influence of a systematic proscription? The answer furnished by the facts just detailed, is, that two bands of politicians whose very names have long since been refuted, by the compassionate bounty of oblivion, had a violent struggle for some score of offices in the

state, and that the rights of unborn millions were sacrificed in the ignoble scuffle.

This at least is the history of the English act, which was the avowed model of that which was afterwards passed in Ireland. By this abominable act, and the statutes which were subsequently framed, the Catholics were completely excluded from every constitutional advantage, reward or immunity, excepting the elective franchise. Of this too they were deprived in the reign of George the First, by the action of a new policy on the part of England, the great object of which was to prevent the formation of an *independent Irish interest*.

From the accession of his present Majesty to the present time, our legislative annals can boast of a series of wise and liberal concessions to the Catholics. It is admitted, on all hands, that the *principle* of the Catholic claims has been hitherto undeniably just and equitable, and that their former applications for relief were sanctioned by the immutable laws of truth and nature. The practical question then resolves itself into the consideration, whether the *principle* before mentioned admits of a further extension, so as to include the removal of the existing restraints and disabilities which affect the Catholics of Great Britain and Ireland.

The Catholics are now excluded by statute from all offices in the law, from all commands in the army, from all employments connected with the

actual government and regulation of the state; from sitting in parliament; from holding corporate situations, &c. &c. &c. No Catholic can present to a living, though Dissenters, and even Jews, are entitled to this privilege; the qualification of Catholic jurors is made higher than that of Protestants; and no relaxation of the ancient code is allowed, except to those who shall conform to the oath and declaration prescribed by 13 and 14 Geo. III. cap. 3.

Now the most fervent advocate for the Catholic claims will not hesitate to avow, that the removal of these incapacities will have a direct and immediate tendency to disturb the entire frame of our constitutional establishments in Great Britain and Ireland. Let the folly and fanaticism of the original framers of these restrictions be ever so clearly demonstrated; let the impolicy of perpetuating them be ever so satisfactorily shewn, still it must be confessed that there is good and sufficient ground for *alarm*, in the total change which their repeal would necessarily occasion. It is in this way that the principles of the two great parties which now divide the state, are rationally reconcileable.

The conservation of the constitution is the object of both parties; they differ only in their views concerning the mode of its accomplishment. The Catholics are, it is true, chiefly supported in their claims by the party in opposi-

tion to the present Government ; but it is equally true, that the persons composing that Government declared themselves hostile to further concessions at a very early period. It must be considered too, that the principles of the party at present in power have been, and still continue to be, the political creed of a very numerous, wealthy, and intelligent proportion of the population of this empire, in relation to the Catholics. Now, even admitting that those persons labour under some degree of misapprehension and prejudice respecting this subject, it behoves us to recollect that Catholic Emancipation is, in point of fact, a *political experiment*, and that the statesmen who might have influence enough to carry the measure, must derive the elements of that influence from the people at large. Are the intemperate persons who write and speak on the Catholic Question prepared to say, that the Ministers are alone responsible for the delay of the final and favourable result, and that the anti-catholic convictions entertained by a vast body of respectable individuals in Great Britain and Ireland are entitled to no weight or consideration in that Parliament whose proudest boast it is that every party can there find advocates of its sentiments and expounders of its views ? To us, indeed, it appears that the duties of the Imperial Parliament would be very imperfectly discharged, if considerable attention were not paid to even the *prejudices* of any

numerous part of the community; and that the tardiness of determination to which it may give rise, is more than compensated by the additional security which is thereby obtained, against unjust and precipitate legislation.* Concurring then in opinion with those persons who anticipate the highest and most unequivocal advantages from a full participation of the honours and rewards of the state with our Catholic fellow-brethren; and yet reserving a sufficient portion of tolerance for the more timid and sceptical of the Protestant community who dissent from our conviction; it remains for us to present such a view of the real merits of the Catholic Question, as may tend to remove a few of the doubts and apprehensions of our opponents.

In the first place, it is perfectly evident from the historical sketch before given, that the present disabilities were imposed without any state necessity, and that the Catholics were prostrate, powerless, and unoffending, when the penal code, from which they now seek to be relieved, was

* Il faut que les affaires aillent, et qu'elles aillent un certain mouvement qui ne soit ni trop lent, ni trop vite. Mais le peuple a toujours trop d'action ou trop peu.—MONTESQUIEU.

Nothing can equal the illiberality with which the character of the late Mr. Pitt is aspersed, because he did not effect the Abolition of the Slave Trade ten years before the nation was ripe for it.

framed, in consequence of the intrigues of two unprincipled factions. In the hour of triumph, when William might have availed himself of the prerogatives of the sword, by reducing the vanquished Catholics to humiliation and servitude, he chose a wiser and more conciliating policy, to acquire the allegiance and affections of the conquered. Three years subsequently, without the plea of ill faith, ingratitude, or disaffection on the part of the Irish, a code of causeless and matchless barbarity was enacted by their Parliament, and rivetted into the great mass of constitutional provisions. Now, as it is impossible to deny or dissemble, that the Catholics of Ireland have since the latter period betrayed a marked disposition to resent their injuries; and to obtain, even by the risks of conspiracy and rebellion, the advantages of which they were then deprived; it becomes us to consider, whether our apprehensions, however just, have not been occasioned by the operation of the very system which we endeavour to retain? Assuming the acknowledged fact of Catholic discontent, the opponents of Catholic Emancipation are bound to shew that it is a very unfair and unreasonable discontent; and that its removal would not be effected by the abrogation of the legal incapacities from which the Catholics assert themselves to suffer.

On the slightest glance, however, it is perfectly obvious to every intelligent person, that the

grievances under which the Catholics still labour, are in their nature and effects sufficient to account for all this discontent and disaffection. That, in short, without the slightest reference to religious distinctions, the *political situation* of the Catholics affords ample grounds for complaint and irritation on the part of that body. It is no doubt true, that the Catholics have largely experienced the bounty of Government during the present reign, and it is asked, are we never to check the career of concession? In answer to this, it may be said, that in elevating the condition of the Catholics, we have naturally exalted their hopes, and that the obvious tendency of all concession, is to multiply the rational expectations of the persons thus deemed deserving of favour. It is inquired, also, what positive oppressions are the Catholics exposed to? Now, the querists should recollect, that, in removing the more rigorous restraints to which the Catholics were subject, we created a new scale of suffering which is felt perhaps more intensely than the former one. The Catholic is no longer disabled from purchasing or inheriting land; from having arms or horses; from being guardian to his own children, &c. &c. but these rude and vexatious infringements on domestic happiness and social security have given place to *intellectual inflictions*, of which every Catholic, animated with honourable ambition, must be acutely sensible. All

the nobler prizes in the great lottery of life; all the dignified stations and distinguished rewards, which quicken the diligence and cheer the labours of the aspiring in every walk of existence, are monopolized by a privileged order of the community, to the utter exclusion of a great body of their fellow-countrymen, professing a faith somewhat dissimilar. Let us not say that the number of those stations and rewards is inconsiderable, when compared with the amount of the population actually excluded. This argument, if pushed to its full extent, would impair the master-spring of human exertion, in every clime, and under every circumstance. The truth is, that contrasting *all* the rewards which wait upon the best exercised energies of man, with the *numbers* among whom those rewards are ultimately distributed, it will appear evident, that the range of recompense is very materially and rigidly circumscribed. In the pursuits of gain, how few are the persons, who, after a life of toil and self-denial, are enabled to attain extraordinary opulence? Let us suppose a state in which the *maximum* of trading acquisitions is restricted to one hundred thousand pounds. There are very few individuals in the most prosperous commercial states, who can realize such a sum, and yet the immediate consequence of such a restraint would infallibly be to paralyze the nerves of industry, and to

exile all the stimulants which contribute to the improvement and invigoration of mercantile interests. Apply this to the condition of the Catholics. They are debarred by a well-contrived and coherent system of exclusion, not only from the loftier and more ennobling advantages which the state affords; but their disappointment is augmented, by the consideration, that the humblest individual, of another persuasion, is entitled to contend for those advantages. But sore and saddening as this exclusion is, in relation to the Catholics, it is incalculably more injurious to the empire in general. The national market of rising talent and liberal exertion is narrowed by the systematized monopoly which prevails throughout all the departments of the state. We are not only deprived of the vast harvest of ability which four millions of our people would not fail to furnish; but the absence of competition secures an ample demand for the slothful and inefficient functionaries whom certainty of success has a tendency to form. The Catholics are not only disheartened and debased, but the Protestants are marshalled and subordinated into indolence and incapacity. We curtail not only the measure of our public resources, but we infuse a principle of morbid inactivity into those parts of the state which should abound with sound and salient springs of national exertion.

Thus far we have examined the propriety and truthfulness of the proposition, that it is wise and prudent to erect the land-marks of concession ; and to establish a line of limitation beyond which it should be perilous for the liberality of the protestant to pass : Let us now direct our attention to another inquiry which is suggested by the refutation of that proposition.

If it be satisfactorily shewn that the absolute refusal of all further immunities to the Catholic body is in direct hostility to the *principle* of all former indulgences, it necessarily follows that assuming our principle to have been right, we should pursue the natural progress of our own system. To this it is objected by the advocates of another policy, that, as the objects now sought for by the Catholics are more important and imposing than those previously conceded, we should exercise a more cautious and frugal discretion : That the barriers of the church would in the event of emancipation be speedily overwhelmed by the natural enemies of our tenets and establishment ; and that not only the regular ascendancy of the protestant community would suffer a diminution ; but that a popish ascendancy founded on its ruins might with certainty be anticipated, from so radical a change in our policy.

It is evident from considerations before detailed that we cannot adjust or appretiate, with even tolerable accuracy, the differences subsisting be-

tween our former concessions, and the value of those now demanded by the catholics of the empire. We relieved them formerly from a host of tangible persecutions, which followed them in o all the avocations and all the privacies of life; into the seclusion of their homes, and the sanctity of their altars. We have now to ease them of another order of visitations, which our preceding kindness has made more obvious and afflicting. The catholic without property—without consideration—and without freedom, did not presume to have *feelings*: *We* have given them to him; in the same process by which we removed what may be called his corporal calamities, we implanted in his mind the seeds of hope, and the elements of ambition. Can we blame him then for fostering under our own hands—for throwing out the verdant shoots grafted by our own liberality—for rising into that aspiring independence which is the natural consequence of all generous cultivation? It may be doubted whether the grinding and oppressive laws under which the catholics laboured forty years ago, were not more prudent as well as more humane, than the policy which prescribes the permanency of the existing system. There was a horrible consistency in the aggregated enormities of the penal code, that rendered it a secure and stable superstructure of tyranny. But the remaining disabilities which affect the catholics, assume a character wholly different. Fruitful in

discontent, though for safety utterly inefficient, they irritate the catholic, without shielding the protestant from apprehension. One party is aggrieved while another is alarmed, and distrust and danger are the inheritance of both.

The safety of the church is asserted to be another obstacle to complete an unconditional emancipation. Now this argument must proceed upon the supposition, that one fifth of the population of the empire, confessedly comprizing less property, intelligence, and influence, even in proportion, that their protestant fellow-citizens will be enabled to effect the conversion of those vigilant and determined lutherans to the errors of the church of Rome. We are so partial to the enlightened and liberal doctrines of the protestant church, that we cannot conceive any such project on the part of the catholics likely to be attended with the success of a single recantation. But if there be truth or example in history we may rest assured that conversions are the effect of tolerance rather than persecution. So long as religion shall subject the professor to temporal grievances, so long will the infatuated victim continue to court sufferings for its sake. Remove impositions from the profession of a faith, and uncheered by the prospect of martyrdom you will see the zealots of this day subside into the indifferent and impartial philosophers of another. Notwithstanding the novelty of the reformation, the protestants of queen Elizabeth's time

relaxed in their enthusiasm, and betrayed a sort of orthodox oscitancy which conduced not a little to the remarkable tranquillity of her reign. A hundred years subsequently, the attempted persecutions of James II. revived all the slumbering and satisfied protestantism of England, and as the temporal advantages of the sect became diminished the confluence of the confirmed and converted was greater and more rapid than ever. The truth is, that the catholics would have more to fear on this ground, in the event of emancipation, than the protestants. The stream of public opinion in Europe for the last fifty years has flowed more towards infidelity than fanaticism. The superstitions and abuses of the Romish church have formed the principal topic for the unsparing wits of every country during the whole of that period. In England, the conduct of the Protestant church, liberal, enlightened, and unsullied, has preserved its members not only from imputation but from seduction. The penal code is at present the great bond which unites all intelligent catholics to the faith of their forefathers. Whatever contempt they may entertain for a religious system which has lost all its weight, and many of its adherents on the continent, still the *point of honour*, the unwillingness to desert a faith which is exposed to such undeserved contumely, will retain them under the banners of popery. But when emancipation shall have taken place, the men of talent and speculation—the

aristocracy of mind among the catholics will no longer evince even a scrupulousness in shaking off the corruptions of their own church, and uniting themselves to the purer and more perfect institutions of the establishment.

But the opponents of emancipation have not yet exhausted their stores of apprehension. Acknowledging the equity of the catholic claims, and tranquillizing their pious fears respecting the strength and safety of the establishment; still their anxiety for a protestant preponderance in the legislature—for a protestant policy on the part of the executive—for protestant wisdom to expound the laws—and for protestant valour to defend them—is so firmly and so naturally allied to the *interests* of many thousand individuals scattered through the long subordinations of the state, that the difficulties of concession seem alarmingly augmented. Let us then examine cautiously and temperately how far *protestant interest*;—how far in short protestant solitudes for power, place, and pension are likely to be repressed or disappointed in the event of catholic emancipation.

In the first place it is admitted by the most persevering antagonists of the measure, that the relative proportions of catholics and protestants in England, Scotland, and Wales, is such, as to preclude all doubts of a vast and overwhelming majority of protestants in the Imperial Parliament. A danger then of this nature can be apprehended

only from the *hundred members* to be elected by Ireland, when emancipation shall have been granted to the catholic body. Assuming that the Irish proportion of legislators is wholly composed of catholics let us pursue them to St. Stephen's chapel. They form there a little popish phalanx, whose every movement is carefully watched by five hundred and fifty eight stern and vigilant adherents of the establishment. Every immoderate claim; every innovating pretension, is strictly scrutinized and infallibly rejected. Tired at length of their situation the catholics break up their band, and disperse themselves through the various parliamentary factions which agitate and vivify the state. Some of them are magnetized by the Treasury, some of them thicken the ranks of opposition; some of them carry votes and piety to the *Saints*; while others, unfixed or unprincipled, are faithful to no party, yet vexatious to all.

But the truth is, that if emancipation were conceded to-morrow, the whole body of catholic electors in Ireland could not possibly send twenty members to the Imperial Parliament. The catholic interest is now exerted and most fairly so, to procure the return of such protestant members as advocate and support their claims in the legislature; and yet how comparatively scanty is the number of such persons? In the event of emancipation a few catholic gentry possessing property and influence in the southern and western counties of Ireland,

might perhaps succeed in ejecting protestant members from their seats, but this substitution could not be effected without extreme difficulty.

Anticipating then the numerous obstructions which will prevent the catholic from winning his way into the legislature, we shall be the better enabled to appretiate the impediments which will oppose his attainment of the lofty and important situations more immediately relating to the government of the state. Can any one believe that a catholic endowed with even the transcendant talents of a Pitt, a Fox, or a Windham, could suddenly arrive at the stations once graced by those illustrious individuals? Until the catholic had formed powerful protestant connexions; until every bigotted partiality for his faith, had faded before the radiant influence of his ambition, he could never hope to gain the greater prizes in the political wheel. A catholic, thus connected and thus animated, would differ from a protestant only in the observance of a few more pious ceremonies sanctioned by the example of his ancestors. He would sustain the liberties, or wield the resources of his country, with the same patriotic ardour that inflamed the eloquence of Burke, or invigorated the commanding energies of Chatham. His religion, no more the pretext for political animosity, would serve only to confirm his probity, to

moderate his passions, and to soothe his calamities.*

To predict the mal-administration of the laws, when entrusted to the wisdom and discretion of catholic judges, is surely venturing too far and too ungenerously into the regions of suspicion and jealousy. That a body of English law originating in the sage precaution of *English Catholics* should be diverted from its alliance with justice, by their catholic descendants, seems a supposition altogether unjust and unfounded. It should be considered that in the event of emancipation, a catholic lawyer would build his successes precisely on the same foundations that the protestant barrister erects them at present. Knowledge, diligence, accuracy, impartiality, and honour, would be then, as now, the prevailing distinctions in that large and liberal profession.

We are afraid of having a catholic Commander-in-Chief, lest he should be tempted to violate with the sword, a matchless civil constitution, for which we are partly indebted to the worth, wisdom, and valour of ancestors born before Luther. Can we

* What Cicero says of literature may be properly applied to the enlightened, rational, and consoling piety of a great mind.—
 “Hæc studia adolescentiam alunt, senectutem oblectant; secundas res ornant, adversis perfugium ac solatium præbent; delectant domi, non impediunt foris; pernoctant nobiscum, peregrinantur, rusticantur.”

apprehend that a catholic general would fight our battles with reluctance against a sacrilegious foe who has deposed and degraded the spiritual head of the catholic church? Do we imagine that a catholic hero would display less zeal in sustaining the sinking liberties of catholic Spain than protestant Moore, who fell nobly in her cause, or protestant Wellington who gloriously survives to assert it? Oh no. The soldiers of the state would be as now the guardians of our interests and honour, the protectors of our freedom, and the architects of our fame.

On the whole then taking it for granted that the measure of emancipation is not only devoid of any immediate or prospective evils, but is, on the contrary, pregnant with vast and decisive advantages to Ireland and the empire; it remains for us to consider the probabilities of its speedy and complete accomplishment. The prospect is sufficiently cheering and satisfactory to the catholic body. The ministers in the course of the late session discussed the proposition then brought forward respecting the catholic claims with candid and manly moderation. They stated themselves to entertain considerable doubts on the subject; but so far from declaring themselves hostile under any circumstances to additional concession, they distinctly avowed a contrary conviction.

Such then is the present state of the catholic question; and the merits of that great cause are

evidently gaining ground among every description of persons in the empire. Like all effectual triumphs over public prejudices and more especially that prejudice which assumes the garb of political prudence, its career is slow and steady. It cannot be unnaturally accelerated. Every succeeding year will behold additional conversions to liberality—to that christian liberality which prescribes charity on earth to the elect of heaven. In the mean while let us journey on in the path of prosperity, faithful to ourselves and formidable to our enemies. The times we live in are distinguished by extraordinary events, abroad, which imperatively teach us the necessity of unanimity at home. The schemes of universal conquest conceived by that individual who endeavours to direct the destinies of nations, and to wield the submissive energies of Europe, from the shores of the Mediterranean to the waves of the arctic ocean; can be successfully resisted only by the united exertions of the British and Irish people. We should remember too the *causes* of European subjection and humiliation. The illiberal and intolerant spirit which pervaded most of the continental institutions excluded vast numbers of the *people* from their natural share in the advantages of the state; and extinguished not only public independence, but also those slender and subordinate rights which are intertwined with the domestic security and “homeborn happiness” of civilized

and social man. Aware of these facilities of conquest, the Ruler of France marched to the capitals of Europe through the unopposing apathy of his natural foes. Whatever plains he traversed; whether his eagles were fanned by an Italian breeze, or floated on Sarmatian storms, he found man already stript of nature's best gifts, and therefore bowed down and moulded for servitude. During our exertions to emancipate the continent, it behoves us to remove the slightest fetters that bind, or even seem to bind, a gallant and generous portion of our population at home. If goodness be the motive, gratitude will be the reward.*

* The writer cannot close a work on the affairs of Ireland, without noticing the benefits which his country has received from the active, upright, and conciliating administration of his Grace the Duke of Richmond. Affable in his deportment, generous in his patronage, just in his views, and tolerant in his measures—his Grace has already realized a reputation, which even faction is unable to sully. The example of the Duke of Richmond will serve to shew future Viceroy, that Ireland is best ruled, through the affections of the Irish people.

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